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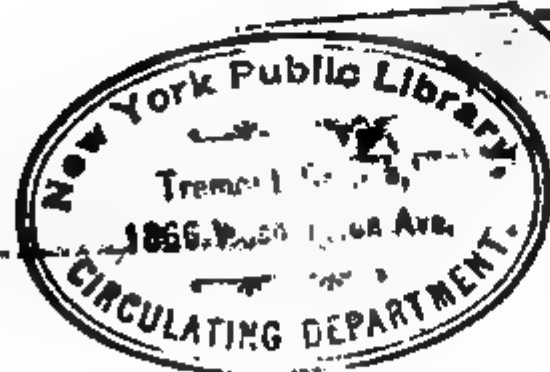
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RIFTS IN THE REEK



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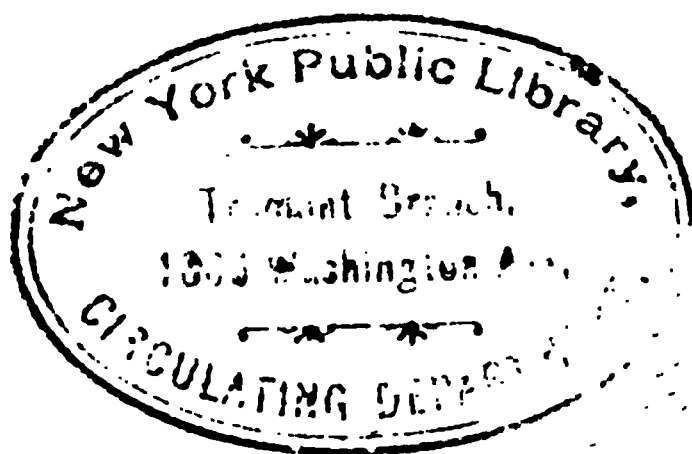


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RIFTS IN THE REEK

BY

JEANIE MORISON Campbell

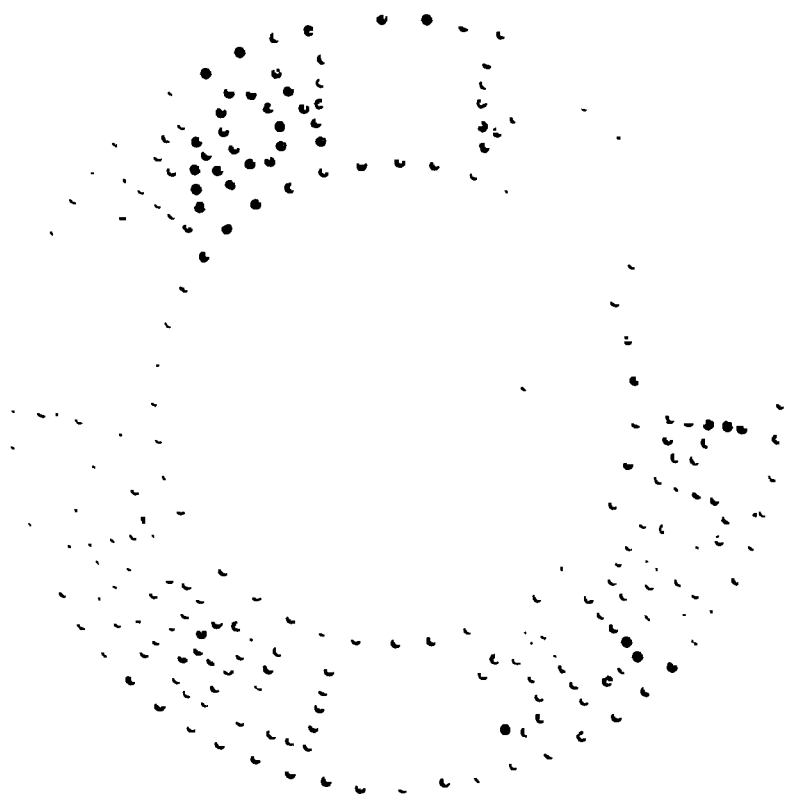
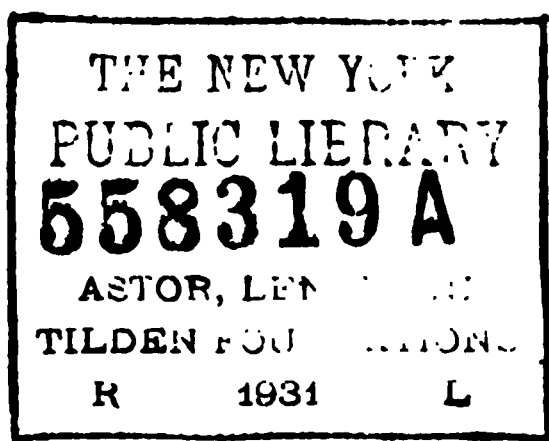


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TO THE MEMORY
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**“When that which is perfect is come, then that which
is in part shall be done away.”**

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RIFTS IN THE REEK.

PROLOGUE

ONLY a block in the Building,
 Only one stone in a wall,
 To this hath it sunk, thine ambition,
 O Soul, that so fain had been all?

Only one 'mid the countless thousands
Of which the great Architect rears,
On our earth, His mighty Temple,
Whose top shall reach the spheres.

Fain hadst thou stood out singly,
In a glory all thine own,
A Druid boulder o'er the waste,
Majestic and alone,

With rough stone finger pointing
From earth to Heaven away ;
A dumb Voice for God 'mid the silence
Of the moor's untrodden way ;

Thou hadst not feared 'mid the stillness
To rear thy front alone,
From earth and its wildering noises
To the silence of God's throne ;

But to be but one stone block only
Of myriads in a wall,
Canst thou stoop thy proud aspirations,
O Soul ! that so fain had been all ?

Yes, that is the task He sets thee,
If thou wouldst have part in His fane,
Ere the world was, whose foundations
Were laid in a Lamb that was slain ;

His Temple whose towering summit
 Evanishes in the blue,
 Where the Lamb, its deep foundation,
 Is its God-crowned copestone too.

No solitary sentinel,
 No Druid stone o'er the waste,
 But one stone on others resting,
 In a slow growth that makes no haste.

One link in the long ascension
 From Chaos and Night alone,
 Of the golden chain that hath ending
 In the God-man on the throne.

Ah ! better than lonely glory
 To be poorest link of that chain,
 To be meanest block of that Building
 For aye that shall remain ;

More glorious than Nirvana
 Where Self and its claims hath cease,
 —The soldier merged in the army,
 The part in the Perfect's peace.—

Incorporate with the Author
And Finisher of faith,
Like His, thy living glory
Hath its deep roots in Death.

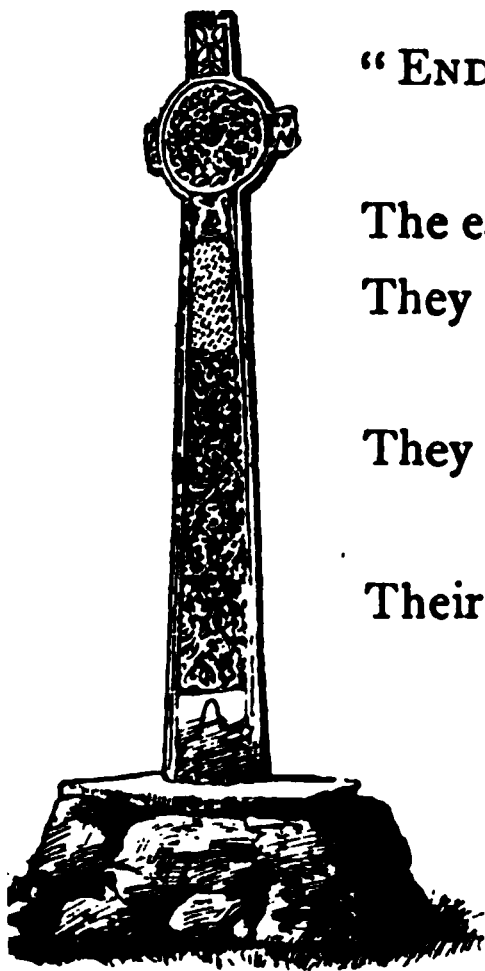
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RIFT I.

COLUM THE WHITE

A.D. 561-597

COLUM THE WHITE.



“ ENDED the Battle ! On Cul-Dreimhne’s
turf

The eagle and the vulture scent the blood ;
They gather from the hills ; above the
slain

They hover ; they swoop down on the
dead ;

Their eyes glare ghastly in the moon ;
they drink

From the red pools, their stream-
ing beaks to heaven

They raise, God thanking !

Druids of Diarmaid made

A magic circle ; Finnian prayed ; but not

With thee, O Diarmaid, fought the Lord of Battles !

The Red Hand of O’Neill hath triumphed. On

The hill, I, Colum, spake with God.

What say'st

Thou, Scandal?"—"Of Diarmaid's dead three thousand
sand

Lie cold, O Colum! on Cul-Dreimhne's turf."

"Three thousand bloody ghosts all unannealed,
By Colum hurl'd into eternity,
For lust of Thy dear Gospel, Christ, who died
For men!"

To Driumfhionn Finnian brought
From far-off southern land the priceless gem,
O Christ! of Thy dear words: I, Columchille,
With a barred door, by candle's flicker, writ
In the dim kirk, in watches of the night.
A spy sent Finnian; whereon the crane
That hops about the altar, spied his eye
Peering through cranny in the wall, and pecked
At it; back howling to his master ran
The cateran;—Finnian would have the book
Colum's right hand had writ, and Diarmaid gave
Judgement betwixt us: "To each cow her calf,
To every book its son-book."—Then in wrath,
I, Colum, roused the Red Hand of O'Neill.

Like a white mist, O Christ ! their sad manes rise !
They hover o'er the red field of their death,
As when at the sun's kiss the valleys smoke ;
Their doleful arms they wave, warning from hence
The Church's Dove, that changed to vulture slew !
Hark to their woeful voices on the wind
That sweeps, O Cul-Dreimhne, thy red-pooled turf !—
“Never, O Colum ! more, Eiré thy home !”

So comes Thy call, O Christ ! that Colum craved
In days of his hot youth, when first he knew
Prayer's breath, like perfume shed upon the wind,
Straight rises where God sits above the blue,
And answer sure brings 'neath the White Dove's wing.
“Foreign mould over me at last,” I prayed,
The call Thy servants of the Thebaid deemed
Greatest and last,—God's perfect servants so ;
Yet aye shrank Colum's flesh from Colum's prayer !
Strong, strong thy cords, O Eiré, and entwined
Deep, deep in Colum's heart-strings, ne'er to be
Dissundered save both brake !—Break now, O Christ !
From these three thousand ghost-tongues comes Thy
call :

“ Ended the Battle ! ”

“Halcyon and sea-gull, circling o’er the wave
That laves thy pebbles, Glas-a-nionn-laid,
—Last strand to bear the print of Colum’s foot
On thee, his Eiré,—hover their Farewell !
Farewell for ever ! for when first the cock
Of Cill-shillach shall sing the coming dawn,
(Would thy cock throatless were, O Cill-shillach !)
Must Colum’s coracle spread its white wings,
—Like thine, thou sea-mew skimming round his prow,
Yet, O less happy ! for thy circles end
Ever in thine own nest in Eiré’s cliffs,
But Colum’s white wings may no circle trace,
But a straight course across this bitter brine
That evermore divides from Eiré’s shore,
On Alba’s storm-beat rocks to plant Christ’s Cross.
—Hark ! through the still dark of yet unborn Morn
A far-off sound !—The cock of Cill-shillach !
Halcyon and sea-gull !”

“Ye winds and waves that Colum bear to Hy,
—Green speck amid the blue, Ioua’s Isle,
King Conall gifteth to King Conall’s King,
Whereon for Columchille to raise His Sign,—
May ye be all that Colum sees from Hy !

Now sinks the round sun ’neath the western wave
Beyond which lies the Eiré of my heart ;
So will I mount yon hill-top thence to scan
The far horizon ; Christ ! may no faint haze,
Cloud-like and dim above the waters, speak
To Colum’s heart of Eiré, lest it break !

’Tis well ! nought save blue sea, blue sky, goldened
At dip of sun ! So do I name this hill
Carn-cul-ri-Erinn ; ¹—here begin new life,
—All Colum’s Past behind the sunset hid
And westering wave !

And first to plant His Sign,—
A granite Cross within a granite Ring,
(The Christ within the All in All of God) ;—
So claiming for its Lord this little Hy,
—This green rock-speck amid the watery waste

¹ Hill of the turning of the back on Ireland.

Of long blue billows cresting into foam,
The sea's wild horses with white flowing manes ;—
With His dear Symbol sanctifying Hy,
God and Redeemer of the whole wide world,
And of each rock lonely amid its seas.

Next, build in circle wide, rampart of earth
With rude stones faced, to guard the holy ground
Whereon of mud and wattles we may rear
His House of Prayer ; its little bell-tower aye
Pointing to Heaven, and with its iron tongue,
—Struck duly morn and eve, and Sabbath-day,—
Calling Hy's simple folk to worship Christ ;
Near it our bothys,—twelve and one apart,—
For Columchille and his companions twelve ;
An Hospice for the strangers whom Christ loved ;
A kitchen, and a dining-place for all.
Without,—the byre, the barn, the mill, the dam,
The quern and farm for daily common needs ;
And on the shore, cobbles and boats to reach
The world beyond the blue that circles Hy.

So shall we live on earth as though in Heaven ;
Life simple, gentle, pure, peaceful, and blest ;

Self and its doleful Past forgot ; each day
With healthful work and holy commune full,
And study of His Word that giveth life ;
And thus from souls with heavenly manna fed
Teach Christ's poor flock in Hy, or at God's call
Seek His far sheep scattered on Alba's hills.
—No care for the poor body save the crust
Of daily bread, and water from the spring ;
The tunic white, and long white-hooded robe,
And the thick shaggy cloak of undyed wool,
Warder 'gainst storm and sea.

So Colum live,

So work, so pray, and so let Colum die !
Ye winds and waves !”

The Cross within the Circle was in Hy.

And Colum and his twelve monks dwelt in Hy,
And God dwelt in him, and he dwelt in God,
So marvels were. Healing his prayers brought ;
Before him sunk the surging waves to peace ;
Savage beasts ceased their rage ; ill spirits fled ;
The wild boar ravening from the wood fell dead
Before his feet ; the monster of the deep,
Roaring to seize its prey, to ocean's caves
Slunk back as Colum signed upon the air
Christ's blessèd Cross. The hidden sin within
Men's hearts he saw and dragged it forth to day
For God to cleanse. He saw the angels come
To carry Home the blessèd dead to Christ ;
He saw the demons fighting o'er the damned ;
With angels spake he on Sithean Mor ;
And in him dwelt the vision that foretells,
For all the universe before his sight
Lay open as within one ray of sun.
In the broad day men saw a heavenly light
Blaze round him ; and before the altar rest
A ball of fire like comet o'er his brow.

Then died King Conall, (who gave Hy to Christ),
And Aidan came that Columchille might bless,
And lay his holy hands on him in Hy,
And consecrate him King.

And Crosses rose,
And many a moor and hill of Alba bare,
'Mid purple ling and bracken, Colum's spire
Pointing to Heaven ; and many a storm-girt isle
Of the far main, 'mid waves' hoarse roar that surge
Through rocky caves, and wild gulls' shriek, and cry
Of kestrel, heard, afar off, clear and sweet
His voice of praise.

Teaching and ruling thus ;
Writing within his cell Christ's blessed words,
Or praying lone in Desert of the Shore,
Or by the sound of bell bidding his monks
At midnight or at morn to agonise
Within their wattle kirk with him in prayer.
Humble, revered, beloved among his monks,
So forty years Columchille dwelt in Hy.

Then Colum saw the angels for his soul ;
And he was glad with more than mortal joy,

So longed he to depart and be at rest.
But when the tidings spread in Hy, and o'er
The mountains and the valleys he had trod,
Each heart bowed down with woe, and from all lips
Went up the breath of prayer. Then Colum grieved,
Knowing such prayers prevail, and sad he saw
The angel-host that came to bear him Home
Their faces Heavenward turn, leaving him here ;
For he was weary longing for Christ's face.

Four long years more he laboured, then God sent
Once more the angels ; charging them to bring
Swiftly His Colum home, ere men could pray.

Thus it befell.

Upon a day of June,
When calm the sea lay like the Sea of Glass,
And all the mountains slept beneath the blue ;
Towards the evening ere the sun went down,
Returned from his monks' bothies, Colum clomb
Carn-cul-ri-Erinn, then lift up his hands
And blessed his Hy, and said : " This place, though
small,
In no small honour yet shall it be held,

Not of the Scots alone but of all peoples.”
Then to his hut he went and wrote upon
His Psalter,—when the words were writ, “They that
The Lord seek shall not want any good thing.”
“Here at this page’s foot I stop, Baithen
Shall finish it.”—And so to even prayer.
This charge thereafter for his monks and Christ’s
Poor flock they fed, gave he to Diarmaid ; “These,
Oh children, my last words, that ye do keep
In charity unfeigned and mutual peace ;
So will God help you, Strengtheners of the Good,
And I, dwelling with Him, will pray for you ;
So shall ye have of Him not that alone
Which this life needs, but the eternal gifts
Of good things that He keeps for them that do
His will.”

Then on the pavement slab, nightly
His couch, he laid him down, his head upon
The stone that was his pillow, sleeping ’neath
The wing of Death’s great Angel.

When the bell
Rang for the midnight prayer, swift he arose
And hasted to the kirk, there first, as aye
His wont. Diarmaid, who running followed, saw

The unlighted kirk's dark windows blaze with light
Unearthly, and the fishermen far out
At sea beheld a column of strange fire
That night stream 'twixt Ioua's kirk and Heaven.

As Diarmaid entered all the kirk was dark.
When lights were kindled and the folk streamed in,
All saw in his accustomed place Colum
The White, before the altar, on his knees.
—The bell ceased, and they waited for his voice
To lead their prayers as ever was his wont,
But Colum moved not : then drew Diarmaid nigh
And knew the dreaded hour,—their Colum's soul
Was winging its far flight.

Once wonderingly
He oped his blue-grey eyes, bright with strange light
Of joy within them,—a hush fell on all,—
They knew he saw the angels come to bear
Him Home : feebly he looked round on the flock
He loved, and strove to bless them :—mute his tongue,
But, passing, with his uplifted right hand,
Once more he made the dear sign of the Cross.

Then 'mid their sobs, in that dark hour of dule,

Colum the White dead in their midst, his flock
Ended the prayers their Columchille began,
Ere reverent they bare his sacred corse
To the stone couch so long his nightly bed.
—Three long bright days and three short nights of
June
They sang beside him.—In Reilig Ohdrain
Within his Hy, then laid him to his rest.
“Foreign mould over him at last.”

Few days

Thereafter Colum Crag and Mun met two
Of Hy, “Is Colum well, Colum the White?”
They asked.—With solemn joy answered the twain,
“Aye, truly is he well, he is with Christ.”

The Cross within the Circle was in Hy.

RIFT II.

MARGARET O' THE MAIDENS'
KEEP

A.D. 1068-1093

MARGARET O' THE MAIDENS' KEEP.

FYTTE I.

THE nicht it was mirk, an' the wind it blew loud,
An' their barque it was driftin' fairly ;
The ladies they stood 'neath its tattered shroud,
In the chill o' the mornin' early.

Oh, dowie I wat were their faces fair,
Micht ane win the ither to see,
For sic blast as blew through their link lang hair
Nae lanthorn's licht micht dree !

"O Mary, Mother," the mother she said,
"For aye a mother are ye,
In pity look doun frae yer throne owerhead
On a mother's extremity !

Not haughty our hearts, sweet Mary mild,
 Though come o' high degree ;
Frae a throne 'tis he flees, my Ætheling child,
 Like the King that was Son to thee :

His sisters fair for their gowden hair
 Seek nor diadem nor gem ;
The cloister pale, and the nun's black veil,
 Bride-home and bride-garb for them.

Sweet Mother, frae where thou sittest on high
 By thy Son on His throne of licht,
Look doun, look doun through the mirk, mirk sky,
 On our mirk, mirk sea this nicht,

That ravens and roars like a beast o' prey,
 To feast on my sweet bairns three,
And spare, by thy mother's agony,
 And by His that died on the tree !”

The nicht it was mirk, and the wind it blew loud,
 Their barque drifts but sail an' helm ;
The skipper he stan's wi' the Saxon lords proud,
 But waiting the wave that should whelm ;

An' some they are cursing like fiends o' hell,
An' some they are on their knees,
When a clear voice it fell like a heavenly spell,
'Mid the tumult o' win's and seas.

"Sweet Mary hath heard," said that voice like a bird
O' calm that broods ower the deep ;
The tattered sails droop, an' the blast's wild swoop
An' the tossing waves settle to sleep.

"See yonder ! See yonder !" sweet Margaret she cried,
"Our Bethlehem Star i' the west !"
An' through mirk o' the nicht the skipper espied
A gleam ower the wild waves' crest !

"'Tis a licht frae the shore," the skipper he cried,
"We drift in a land-locked bay !
Noo thanks to Our Lady aboon," he cried,
"An' our sweet lady here this day.

Noo whatsoever may be yon shore,
Whate'er this bay whar we grope,
Whar yon licht gleams out the mirk waters o'er
Sall aye be ca'ed 'Margaret's Hope !'"

FYTTE II.

KING MALCOLM has come frae Northumbria's lan',
 An' a wrathfu' man is he ;
 The auld he has slain wi' his red right han',
 The young hailed to slavery.

“ Because Gospatrick, Northumbria's Thane,
 My Cumbria did harry,
 Not a son o' its Saxon folk sall remain
 That the Norman Bastard let tarry.”

Wi' his English captives in servile chains
 He has come to his eyrie sae high,
 Whar the Keep o' the Maidens looks doun ower the
 plains,
 Frae its wild rock that towers 'gainst the sky.

The King he looks out frae his casement pane,
 Ower the Firth in the mornin' early,—
 “This day shall be joy in Dumfermlaine,
 For my captives there will I carry ;

An' never a cot amang the lave,
 My troth, but it shall be merry,
 Its gude-wife at ease wi' her Saxon slave
 Wood to chop, an' water to carry !

Gospatrick may sit intil Bamburgh's Ha',
 But ne'er a carl or carline
 He'll hae to dight platter, or pit steed i' sta',
 They're a' aff wi' me to Dumfermlaine !”

He looks frae his casement out ower the Forth,
 Out ower i' the mornin' early,—
 “What, ho ! Sir Warder, look out to the North,
 What lies in yon bield sae buirdly ?

A battered hulk, wi' shrouds in shreds,
 Yet the hulk o' a lordly wherry !
 Noo hie ye doun to the shore,” he said,
 “See what ship yon is lies at the ferry.”

They cam' to the ferry, the Scottish lords a',
Whar the Firth frae the sea grows narrow,
An' the queenly Forth flaws twixt wa' an' wa'
O' wooded knoll an' hollow ;

They hae boarded the ship that lies in the bay,
The Scottish lords ane an' a',
Their trusty steeds mounted an' hied them away,
To the King or the gloamin' fa'.

“An' what did ye find, my Scottish lords a',
An' what is't that lies at the ferry,
That nae prisoners ye bring to the Maidens' Keep
Ha',
Nor yon proud Saxon hulk did ye harry?”

“To the Keep o' the Maidens nae prisoners we
bring,
Nor yon proud Saxon hulk did we harry,
For een ne'er hae seen sae goodly a thing
As yon that lies at the ferry !

Nae galley sae proud, spite its tattered shroud,
E'er hath sailed ower the Firth's blue waters ;

Then sae lordly in grace, maids sae winsome o' face,
 Can be nane but a King's sons an' daughters.

Though nae word can they speak o' our Celtic
 tongue,
 Nor we their Saxon speech follow,
 A King's barge be sure 'tis that lies there among
 The woods by the ferry's hollow !

Ane maid aboon a' o' sae gracious a glee,
 Yet sae queenly her gowden head,
 Though a man fain wad dee but her red lips to pree,
 He maun fa' on his knees i'stead."

The King he has mounted his trusty steed,
 An' hied him doun to the ferry ;
 "Noo these be the Æthelings, in very deed,
 An' safe wi' me sall they tarry,

For his sake that took me, a stranger child,
 By the bloody Macbeth hunted sorely,
 To his board an' his cup, blessèd Edward mild,
 As aft times I've tauld ye the story ;

—
An' nane o' the saintly Edward's blood
E'er to Malcolm a stranger sall be ;
The half o' his cup an' the half o' his board
Aye are theirs, as his were to me."

FYTTE III.

“O MOTHER! My mother!” sweet Margaret, she
cried,

Whar the Maidens’ Keep looks ower the sea,

“Let your daughter, my mother, creep close to your
side,

For the Scots’ King comes woin’ to me!

An’ oh! it is not mine to give,

My mother, this hand o’ mine,

For lang I am trysted His maid to live,

The blessèd Bridegroom Divine;

An’ how can I put this lily hand,

That He looks I keep clean for Him,

In the red right hand that our English land

Bathes in blood and murder grim?

For Malcolm's rude kiss how change the bliss
O' my Heavenly Bridegroom's breast?
For his savage throne how renounce my own
In the Kingdom o' the Blest?"

"My daughter! My pearl! Sweet Margaret mine!
Little wist I to counsel thee,
Yet thy Heavenly Bridegroom ne'er dread thou to
tyne,
Whatsoe'er thy earth's life lot may be!

As I knelt at my lattice at dawn this day,
And the sun he rose ower the sea,
I knew that a sign o' the Will Divine
Ere he set should be sent to thee."

.

Oh, low, low he louted the Scottish knight,
He louted him down to the knee!
"A tale for your ears hae I, ladies bright,
Nane kens save ane ither an' me!

Oh, vilely I plotted again' my lord,
Feigned vilely his friend for to be;

I drank o' his cup, an' I sat at his board,
Frank an' kindly he smiled on me !

An' a' the while the assassin's knife
I had hid 'neath my doublet rare,
An' the deadly drop to ease him o' life
In my chamber I did prepare !

Ae morn to the huntin' we a' were gane
That abode in my master's Ha',
An' wi' wha but me maun he ride alane
O' his knights baith great an' sma' !

We rade on thorough the gude green wood
Wi' the dew-drops sparklin' rarely,
Till we cam' to a pleasant glade an' good ;
The lave a' ahint us fairly.

“Noo halt we here, Sir Knight,” he cried,
“Noo halt we in this hollow,
Whar nought by man may be espied
Through the green woods this glade that swallow ;

Noo bide ye on palfrey or licht ye doun,
Your lead will I surely follow,
Wi' our ain twa hands an' help frae none,
Show whilk's the best man in this hollow !

For death i' the cup is a wiffis' way,
An' a knife i' the sleeve a thief's ;
Noo choose ye yer weapon like true knight this day ✓
Man to man dispute we your griefs !

Ne'er plot like a murderer me to slay,
But han' to han' like a knight,
Stan' up wi' me in this green glade the day,
An' God defend the right !”

Oh, low, low I louted upon my knee,
Kissed the dust at his feet as he spake !
That he bore him sae knightly to unknighly me
My heart in my bosom it brake !

In the dust I grovelled afore his feet,
Tauld him a' my deadly sin,
Swore his man to be wheresoe'er we should meet
A' my life, but his pardon to win.

h, gracious he stoopet an' raised me up,
An' gracious he set by his side,
eat at his board an' to drink o' his cup,
An' to nane spake o' what did betide.

le man kens the thing, save me an' the King,
An' glad wad I gie limb an' life
serve him but here whar his heart it hauds
dear"—

Quoth the Maid—"Bid him come for his wife."

FYTTE IV.

THERE was wassail an' wine in Dumfermlaine's Ha',
Gauds rich an' rare to be seen,
An' Malcolm he sat 'mang his gentles a',
By his side his young English Queen.

Oh, rich an' rare were the gauds she wore
O' purple an' cramoisie,
Scottish een ne'er hae seen the like afore,
Frae lands far ower the sea.

Assiettes o' gowd they did not lack,
Nor flagons o' gowd for the wine,
An' aye there stood at the King his back,
His guard, lest he honour should tyne ;

An' the gentles a' their kilts an' hose
They maun be o' the tartan fine,
To pleasure the een o' the English Rose
That wi' Scotland's rough Thistle did twine

The Queen she has een o' the winsome blue,
Wi' pearls binds her gowden hair,
An' witty her words an' wise an' true,
Ilk guid knight's heart she hauds there.

The wassail an' wine it goes round an' round,
An' late, late they rise them up,
Quoth the Queen, "My lords, let our feast be
crowned,
Yet wi' ane more loving cup ;

Noo here's to the health o' that gallant knight,
Low his state be or high this day,
That ere frae the table he rises ilk nicht
His knightly debt who doth pay

For the meat an' the drink an' the table spread,
To Him who giveth all ;

The Queen drinks to him who his Ave hath said,
‘Margaret’s Grace Cup’ men sall it call.”

The Queen an’ the King they rise in their place,
A’ the guid knights the table round,
An’ wi’ fu’ bickers quaff they Queen Margaret’s
Grace,
To ilk knight God to thank that is found.

.

Oh, merry rang the axe in the good green wood,
An’ merry the pick in the quarry,
Like a dream there rose where Dumfermlaine’s Ha’
stood
A fair fane to God an’ His glory.

Skilled workmen they cam’ frae across the sea
To chisel the stone sae fine,
An’ carvers in wood an’ ivory
An’ gowd for St Mary’s shrine.

The Queen she wrought, ’mid her maidens all
(O’ Scotland’s best blood were they),
Altar-cloth, stole, cope an’ chasuble
Decked with rarest broidery.

Oh, gleefu' they chatted her maidens a',
 An' gleefu' it rang out their sang,
 But never a word frae their red lips did fa'
 To an angel choir had done wrang ;

For the Queen sae gracious, an' young, an' fair,
 Wi' a glance o' sic winsome glee,
 Bore a soul sae white, not the hardiest dare
 Wi' one speck front its purity ;

An' aye she prayed for King Malcolm's soul,
 As her Abbey it rose 'mid the wood,
 Buttress an' arch, till a perfect whole
 As a dream o' beauty it stood ;

She has won him by her winsome ways,
 She has won him for Christ her King,
 An' ne'er the least word that his Margaret says,
 But her Canmore takes heed to that thing,

An' hundreds she gathers o' Christ His poor
 Frae the country far an' wide,
 An' to them they enter, an' shut to the door,
 —The Queen wi' the King at her side,

An' on them they wait in Christ His name,
—On ae side the Ha' the King,
On its ither the Queen,—nor think it shame
Food an' drink wi' their ain han's to bring.

An' aye as she rides in the King's highways
The bēggars about her thrang,
To nane she says nay that for help do her pray,
Ilk rights that hath a wrang ;

An' that nane be kept back by her queenly state
She sits on a wayside stane,
That a' may come near, be they sma' or great,
Wha hae word for her ear alane.

An' aye in the forty days o' Lent
An' the forty nights or Noël,
Her bride-bed she quits or the hours be far spent
For God's Kirk its cauld chancel.

An' there on her face, 'neath the Holy Rood,
She prostrates herself in sorrow
For the sins o' the past, prays the Shepherd Good
For strength an' grace for the morrow.

.
The King in his privy purse he has gold
For the altar on Maundy Thursday,
But alack an' alas ! when the coins are told
Twa pund's Scots are wanting fairly !

“Ha ! ha ! let us see !” quoth the King, in glee,
“What thief 'tis that robs me sairly !
For I hae a thocht to my mind while's been brocht,
An' this job 'ill settle it rarely !”

He has gane inside his ain closet door,
He has hidden ahint the arras !
An' wha but the Queen comes by to his store
O' gowd coins a' ready for High Mass !

The coffer she's oped wi' the King's ane key
An' twa gowden guineas has sto'en,
To gie her puir folk ; when what should she see
But the King's laughing face front her own !

“I hae ye at last, ye wicked thief !
I hae caught ye red-handed !” quoth he ;

“What plea hae ye noo to win ye relief
Frae the law’s pains for robbin’ o’ me?

An’ blacker sin yet, ye infidel knave !
For sacrilege sure ’tis to borrow
My gowd for the Mass !—What say ye to save
Yer sawl frae that sin an’ sorrow ?”

The Queen she has blushet a rosy red,
An’ she pouts an’ she smiles thegither,
“My Lord the King, mind ye what words ye ~~sae~~ ~~and~~
When we stood at the altar wi’ ither?

Was’t no that ye dowered me wi’ a’ yer gear,
Wi’ the King’s sell ane that day frae?
Then hoo am I thief? Thae gowd coins here
The King to his ain sell doth pay !

An’ the like in the ither count, my plea,
Ane Christ’s puir folk wi’ their King,
Gin I tak frae His altar, Himsel’ ’tis to gie,
Sae nae count again me can ye bring !”

.

In the Queen her oratoire sits the King,
Wi' her missals an' psalters round him ;
Oh, tender he turns ower ilk dainty thing,
Though sair their letters confound him.

"Noo whilk o' them a' loes she best?" quoth he ;
"To read them I hae nae skill,
Yet ilk crocket word it is dear to me,
Tells Margaret our dear Lord's will :

An' to ane an' a' for her dear sake,
An' for His that died on the Tree,
Malcolm Canmore this day his homage doth make,
An' kisses them here on his knee.

Come hither, come hither, Sir Priest," he cries
To Turgot, the Queen's confessor,
"Show the King whilk o' these the Queen most doth
prize.
For its words o' comfort that bless her."

The priest he has waled, and intil the King's hand
St John his Evangel hath laid it ;

“Noo send for a goldsmith, gie Malcolm’s command
Wi’ gowd an’ wi’ pearl to braid it.

For the blest words o’ Him that died on the Rood
A’ are pure gowd an’ pearls maist rare ;
An’ for Malcolm’s ain Pearl nae pearl’s ower guid
Wi’ her saintly white sawl to compare !”

FYTTE V.

To the Council Ha' o' the Maidens' Keep
 They hae come frae Loch Leven's water,
 An' its Isle round whilk the blue waves sleep,
 Or dimple in sunlit laughter,

That Brude the son o' the Picts' last king
 To God an' His Keledai gifted,
 Auld Bricius the Head an' his monks in a ring,
 Their faith an' their rites to hae sifted.

The Queen she is there wi' her winsome grace,
 An' the King wi' his buirdly favour,
 An' Godwin frae England in Lanfranc's place,
 An' Turgot the Queen's confessor.

Fu' lowly she kneels the auld Bricius afore
That has come frae his Hermit-cell,
Prays his saintly blessing her whole life o'er
Like brooding wings to dwell ;

Syne saftly she speaks in her Saxon speech
That the King into Scots he doth render,
As ane fain that wad learn frae ane that can teach,
O' the auld monk sae reverent an' tender.

“ My Father, our blessèd Lord, nights and days,
In the desert sae bleak and sterile
Fu' forty fasted, 'mang wild beasts' ways,
Read we not in His holy Evangile ?

Dear Father, gin He wi' His sinless soul,
Bore fu' forty days that sorrow,
Can we, His poor sinfu' servants, thole
But thirty-six to borrow

Frae the meat an' the drink an' the table spread,
As the wont is in Scotland this day ?
And wherefore o' His blest Body the bread
To eat should we say oursels nay

On the day He rose, His Easter Feast
Wi' His whole Catholic Kirk for to share
The joy o' His table as loving guest,
An' tasté o' His heavenly fare?

An' on His weekly Holy day
Should ony man burden bare,
My Father, when He bids a' to stay
Their wark for blessèd prayer?"

Sic queries an' mair wi' her queenly grace
She has set the Council afore ;
Auld Bricius the Abbot he rose in his place,—
'Neath the Monkish cowl he wore

The silver locks ower his broad brent breast
An' his age-bowed shoulders streamèd,
As in monk's weeds he stood, amang Scotland's best,
Wi' the een o' ane that dreamèd.

"My gracious ladye," the auld man he said,
"For thy gracious words thanks we gie,
My twelve poor monks, and I their Head,
Frae the Isle o' Loch Leven's sea.

Oh weel ye speak, my gracious Queen,
An' weel can auld Bricius see
The licht o' His blessèd Spirit's sheen
That shines on the brow o' thee.

Sma' matter it is for four days more
On gruten and druchtan to fare,
Or the eggs an' lard o' the Easter store
Its deer's flesh an' hog's flesh we share ;

Yet since Holy Columba Scottish wont hath it been
Six weeks Lenten Fast but to keep ;—
An' men do say, maist gracious Queen,
Truth comes to auld Bricius in sleep.

An' this vision there came to his dreamin' een,
As he sat by the silver shore
On the lands o' Ballechristen, gien
To God an' Saint Servan of yore ;

In Cill-Righmonaigh's¹ new great kirk he seemed,
Lighted fair for the Easter Feast,

¹ St Andrews.

An' lo ! on its lectern he saw, as he dreamed,
Frae his ain Psalter 'twas read the Priest,

An' near by it his auld missal lay,
An' a voice the nicht wind seemed to send
Through the lighted kirk, " Haud fast the auld way,
The new beginneth the end."

Syne he stood in the cell whar he's lived an' prayed,
On the Isle of Loch Leven's sea,
An' lo ! wolf an' fox their nests there had made,
An' their whelps held its tenancy ;

On the ledge o' the rock the wild fowl bred
Whar he was wont to pray,
An' the cells whar his twelve monks their missals had
read
But twelve heaps o' ruin lay.

Their Isle it lay waste, deserted o' all,
Then a sough with the sad breeze did blend,
" Haud fast by the auld ways," a voice seemed to
call,
" Wi' the new ways beginneth the end."

Better days may ye see, gracious Ladye fair,
New ways may the auld ways excel,
But auld Bricius' the last, he misdoubts him sair
On Brude's Isle o' God's Keledai to dwell.

FYTTE VI.

QUEEN MARGARET she lies in the Maidens' Keep,
 An' a sair disease it hath caught her ;
 The King he wad aff to the castled steep
 That stands by the Alne's water.

“Noo bide ye, my lord, by my side this day,
 For my sawl it forbodes disaster,
 These een ne'er sall see ye that black hour frae
 That ye ride Earl Robert after.

Oh, war ! 'tis a witless an' worthless game
 Sae frae Christ His Evangile we borrow”—
 “Yet a man's hand maun keep his head a' the same,
 An' peace wi' dishonour is sorrow ;

When the crafty Norman my castle has ta'en,
An' pit a' my men to the slaughter,
Sall Malcolm sit still nor lift hand for his slain,
That lie thick i' the Alne's cauld water?

Sall Malcolm forget Earl Siward's son,
Strong Waldeof he lo'ed as a brither,
William trapped through a wife, like mighty Samson,
Kept in chains in his dungeon to wither?

Noo rest ye, gude dame," quoth the King his Grace,
"Noo rest ye, my winsome marrow,
For Malcolm maun ride Earl Robert to face,
Yet hame will he ride on the morrow."

He has ridden away frae the Maidens' Keep,
Left his Queen in her dule an' her sorrow,
Wi' their twa braw sons, to the castled steep
By the Alne,—Wae worth the morrow!

The King wi' his Scots an' his bonny sons twa
They are camped roun' the steep by the water;
Their bagpipes they blaw, their tartans wave braw,
Earl Robert need crave nae quarter!

“But wha is yon frae the postern gate
Slinkin' doun by the Alne's water?
He has keys in his han'! Bid the sentries wait
Or they shoot—we can hang him after!

By the Queen's Black Rood 'tis Morel!” Malcolm
cries,

“Earl Robert's ain sister's son,
He brings us the keys! Is't through Margaret's
prayers pious
That bloodless the castle is won?”

Frae his tent out he springs, a' guileless an' brave,
Nor treachery dreams he to dread,—
Ae thrust to his heart gies that fause-hearted knave,
An' Margaret's brave Malcolm lies dead!

Then out in a swarm Earl Robert his men,
Frae the castle gates come pouring doun
On the Scots a' dismayed an' bewildered then
When has fa'en Scotland's pride an' crown.

Young Edward fell fighting aside his sire,
An' a ring o' gude Scots Knights,

They lie round their King i' the bloody mire
As they sat upon festal nights.

The Alne sweeps deep an' darkly doun,
Wi' November floods swollen its water,
An' mony a kindly Scot did it drown
Driven there i' the darkening after.

Nor ane true Scot at the dawn o' day
Was left their dead master to carry,
When his corse twa Northumbrian lads did lay
In a cart, by Tyne's mouth to bury.

Oh, wae for his Queen i' the Maidens' Keep
That he left in her dule an' her sorrow !
An' wae for the bairns that a faither maun weep,
—Malcolm rides nae mair hame on the morrow !

FYTTE VII.

THE Bishop in Cill-Righmonaigh's Tower,

He sits an' looks ower the sea :

“An' what man comes yonder the pebbly beach ower
In priestly livery ?

Weel seem I to ken that fair face o' his,

But where was't I saw it afore ?—

By Margaret's Black Rood, her young priest it is,

The saintly Queen's sent to my door !”

He has passed through the Bishop's palace door,

He has mounted the Bishop's stair,

An' he stands the holy Turgot before,

In his face a dark despair :

“O Father, dear Father!” he cries, an’ stops,
Nae ither word can he say,
For the tears like heavy thunder-drops
Choke the speech that wad tell his wae.

“Oh, wae is me!” quoth the Bishop then,
“For Scotland woe worth the day!
For weel or ye speak yer message I ken,—
Our saintly Queen’s won away!

Oh, sairly my heart foreboded ’twas true,
That word or we parted she said,
‘Ne’er here we meet more,’ for her deep sawl it knew
Or lang frae earth’s bonds ’twad be fled.

Ower an’ ower she pled me to pray for her soul
Through the dark when it winged its lone flight,
An’ her bairns left ahint have in holy control
For God an’ His Kingdom o’ light.

Oh sair, sair I wept as I bade her adieu,
That her dear face nae mair should I see,
For my deep heart it knew that her sawl it heard true
God’s voice that spake privily.

Oh, why was't no I that stood by her side,
 When her gracious soul took its flight,
For weel do I wat Heaven's door it stood wide,
 For that white-winged bird to alight !”

“ **O**wer true, ower true !” the young priest he cried,
 “ My Father your heart it doth tell,
For unworthy I 'twas that stood by her side
 When Saint Margaret to earth bade farewell.

An' straight am I come frae the Maidens' Keep,
 Her pure corse maks holy this day,
To the Father she lo'ed, how she gaed to sleep
 An' the dule o' her last hours to say.

Oh ! wae is me, 'tis but Friday this day,
 An' 'twas but on the Friday past
I stood by her side, heard her dear voice say
 First words o' the wae that cam' fast !

For as morn waxt to noon a deep darkness fell
 Ower the licht o' her spirit serene ;
Wi' een fix't she sat, as ane under the spell
 O' some horror by nane ither seen.

Lang, lang sat she silent an' white as death,
Wi' thae terror-struck een o' amaze ;
At last, in low sobs, as ane gasping for breath,
The fatefu' words dropping, she says—

'It mayhap that this very day doth befall
To our Scotland sic dule an' wae,
As there hasna been through the lang ages a',—
Nor anither word mair did she say.

An' that day there fell, whom her heart it lo'ed *well*,
On the height by Alne's water,
A Faither an' Son, whose tale men sall tell
In Scotland wi' tears ever after !

An' four days thence she raise frae her bed
In her chapel to hear Holy Mass,
An' for the last time o' Christ's Body the bread
Through her death-whitening lips did pass.

Then her throes they cam on her like pains o' hell,
An' she laid her doun to dee,
An' bade us the Holy Psalter tell,
Bid her sawl to Christ fervently.

An' sair, sair she pled for her ain Black Rood
 That she brought frae far Hungary,
 That in ivore an' gowd hauds the blessèd wood
 O' Christ His agony.

Its kist o' aik it was ill to ope,
 'Oh, hapless, guilty me !'
 She cries, 'That God forbids the hope
 To kiss His Son's blessèd Tree !'

And when that blessèd Rood at last
 Her glazing eyes did see,
 She strove to kiss it, though passing fast
 In Death's extremity.

An' still as her body grew cauld in death
 Her spirit staid rapt in prayer,
 David's contrite psalm gasped wi' fainting breath,
 In her hands the blessèd Rood bare.

An' as thus she lay at the point to yield
 Her pure soul to God, there stood
 In her chamber young Ethelred fresh frae the field
 Of Alnwick, red wi' blood.

Ae moment life's flickerin' spark or it fled
Flamed up her young son for to greet,
'Hoo is't wi' yer faither an' brither?' she said.
'Weel,' the boy said,—nor daured her een meet.

'I know it, my boy, I know it,' she said;
'Weel—hoo could it be ither?
Yet by our ae blude an' this Rood,' she said,
'Tell me true o' yer faither an' brither.'

'Thy husband an' son they are lying slain,
Side by side on the height by Alne water.'
'Then thanks an' praise to the Lord again
For this news o' dule an' slaughter,

That comes at the end to break the last chain
To this mortal life that bound me,
Maybe this deep dule is to cleanse some stain,
Or Death its dark floods close round me.

Lord Jesu Christ, who by God His will
An' the Holy Ghaist His aid,
By thy death givest life to the hale world still,
Deliver me,'—she said.

MARGARET O' THE MAIDENS' KEEP. 61

An' at the word her blessèd soul

The Lord Christ He did free"—

Wi' bended head, "Her life," Turgot said,


"May we live, her death may we dee!"

FYTTE VIII.

OH, Donald Bane is a man o' might,
An' a man o' craft is he,
He has gathered his bare-legged caterans to fight,
Frae the Isles o' the Western Sea.

Quoth he, " My brither King Malcolm doth sleep
Fu' weel by the Alne's cauld waters,
An' wha is there noo guards the Maidens' Keep
Save a dead wife, her bairn sons an' daughters ? "

Sae frae Western Isles he has ca'd up his men,
To Edwin's toun he has brought them,
He has set them a' round its Castle wa's, then
Thinks he, " Scotland's heirs I hae caught them ! "



Could an' calm Margaret lies i' the Maidens' Keep,
Shrouded stately as fits a King's daughter,
Nae war's hurly-burly can wake frae that sleep,
Nae dread o' Donald Bane's slaughter !

"But, oh !" quoth young Ethelred, "Hoo may we win
Our dear Mither's will for to follow,
To lie the kirkyaird o' Dumfermlaine within ?
To lay her elsewhere were a sorrow.

But Donald Bane's caterans are round the wa's a',
The gates they hae guarded fairly,
An' hoo we may win wi' her dear corse awa',
By her ain kirk to lay, vexes sairly !"

The easterly haar it blows damp frae the sea,
It blows damp in the mornin' early,
Sae thick ye can see neither rock, wa', nor tree,
The Keep o' the Maids it hides fairly.

"Oh, gin ye can win doun the rock's west face,
Frae the wee postern yett," quoth her daughter,
"Nae caterans keep guard ower yon break-neck place,
An' the easter haar blows frae the water,

That nae e'e may see either rock, wa', or tree
I' the mist the Maids' Keep that swallows ;
Gin ye win doun the Rock, ye may aff by the sea
To Dumfermlaine, or Donald Bane follows."

They hae wrappit her weel in her shroud o' silk,
On their shoulders her light bier they carry,
An' doun the steep rock, 'neath the easter haar's mirk,
They spiel, nor a moment they tarry :

An' awa' to the Forth's side ; at " Margaret's Hope "
Their boat it lies at the ferry,
Then ower the dark waves o' the braid Firth's scope
Their blessèd burden they carry.

An' thorough the woods round the Abbey's wa',
She lang kent an' lo'ed sae dearly,
Nor ever her gracious corse they lat fa',
Till Dumfermlaine's kirkyaird they wan fairly.

They hae laid her aneath her ain kirk's shade,
Whar Dumfermlaine's green woods hide her,
An' her Malcolm they brocht frae whar he was laid,
To sleep his lang sleep aside her.

.
Quoth the Pope o' Rome, "'Tis a saint, she maun lie
'Neath the Rood afore the High Altar."

To carry her there Monk an' Bishop they try,
Wi' bell an' wi' buik,—yet they falter,

For ilk step they gang frae that kirkyaird grave,
Her corse it waxes heavier,
Till they stan' stock still;—quoth ane to the lave,
"Let us tak up the auld King wi' her."

Then licht grew her corse in their arms as they stood,
Whan her Malcolm they bare him aside her,
An' she sleeps her lang sleep where the Holy Rood
In the shade o' Christ's Cross doth hide her.

RIFT III.

“NAE OUTGAIT”

A TRILOGY

I.

A.D. 1572.

—Being the musings of my Lord the Secretaire, at his house in the Meal Market, and in his chamber within the Great Hall of the Castle of Edinburgh, when besieged there of the Lords; sent by his maist sorrowful relict Mistress Mary Maitland, umquhile Mary Fleming, to her auld playmate and maist worthy cousin, Mistress Mary Seton.

CAM Mister David Lindsay, Minister
At Leith, here to us yesterday at e'en,
From Mister Knox wha lies upon his bed,
Sick unto death, within his house, hard by
The Netherbow, with parting words to Grange;
Warning and bidding, in the name of God,
To leave this evil Cause, and render up
The Castle; and gif not, then certainly
Shall he be brought down ower its walls with shame,
And hing against the sun;—so God assures

Him,—saith said Mister John. Somewhat movet
Thereat, Kirkcaldy spake with me, wha bid
Him send, by the said Mister David, word
Again. “Go, tell ye Mister Knox he’s but
A dryttinge prophet.” Whilk said David did,
And cam this morn to bring us word again
What Mister John said on receipt thereof.

In sooth, my heart goes out to the auld man,
Upon his deid-bed by the Netherbow :
A strong man was he ever, and a true,
In a mad world where true men count as rare
As phoenix of the fables ; yet austere
He is, and when,—to my poor thinking,—lies
Of other men do meet his strong desires,
As credulous unto the falsest tongue
As in his own soul true.—He slandered me
Full sore, this last All Hallowtide within
Sanct Giles’s Kirk, saying I plainly spake,
Here in the Castle, that there neither is
Nor Heaven nor Hell,—God but a nursery Bogle ;
—Whereof never sic word I spake !

Not sic
My mother’s teaching, ’mang the Lammermuirs

In Lethington's auld Tower,—where rins the rain
Through grinning goblins' mouths from aff its roof;
And still they dwell,—the dear auld mother, worn
Somewhat and pale, and marred with anxious lines
Graved by these troublous years in the dear face
Where aye for me yet shines a mother's smile:
And the grand blind auld father by her side;
—She, at her spinning-wheel in the Great Hall,
He, sitting upright, with white flowing locks,
In his big chair that he may feel the sun,
Where the Hall's window looks on Lammerlaw;
While sister Mary taketh from his lips,
With patient care, in her fine hand of writ,
Sonnets and verses,—in whose peaceful thoughts
He dwells these latter days, nor mells with strife
Of Kirk or Crown.

Better he might have kent,
—Good Mister John,—the godly upbringing,
Upright and simple, true to God and man,
Of Lethington's auld Tower, where the grouse crow,
And wild the moor-cock fly ower Lammermuir;
For scarce a short mile aff the Gifford Gait,
Where he was born and bred, and laddie doft

His bonnet blue to Lethington's young Laird ;
—Its auld Laird now, langsyne a Judge and blind,—
My father ; all,—Queen's men and King's men, priests
And preachouris,—“ The good Sir Richard ” call.
—Little dreamed Mister John, these by-gane days,
This day sic-like a message he would send
The auld Laird's son !—Yet sair, I wis, John's heart
There on his deid-bed is for Grange and me :
For Mister David saith, he answeret
Unto my mocking words : “ For thae twa men
That I have lovet dear, sair with my God,
My soul hath travaillet these mony days ;
—For ane, I am assured his soul shall live,
But for the other nae assurance is
That e'er it shall be weel.” Alack ! good John,
E'en from thy deid-bed are they threatenings sore !
Stern aye to speak the truth,—as seems to thee,—
In gloomy forebodes, though thy heart it break !

Yet little wonder is, this devils' dance,
Of these maist bloody Guises set asteer
In Paris, maddens him to lift his voice,
—Like him that in the desert cried lang syne,—
In threatenings very sore. Ower true, alack !

The word that Lindsay in Sanct Andros spake,
 “The reek of Maister Patrick Hamylton
 Infecteth every ane it blaws upon.”
 Gif our Queen’s mother had taen tent thereto
 And let the Preachouris alane, ither
 Had been the tale of this poor realm, as weel
 As of her ain maist luckless dochter!—Sooth,
 Sair I misdoubt nae English perfidy
 E’er struck a blow sae shrewd unto the heart
 Of our Queen’s desperate cause, as did this French
 Orgy of devils in the Paris streets
 On St Barthol’me’s Eve.

Mister Knox saith

It is an evil Cause, and gif we leave
 It not will draw down God’s just vengeance on
 The heads of Grange and me ;—yet know we not
 Full oft, good causes, through the evil men
 That work in them, do grow of ill repute?—

Let me review, now on this Castle Rock,
 Here hemmed in of the Lords, and kept in siege,
 As idle I, perforce, sit through the days,
 A helpless hulk, my messan on my lap,

—(That woman-like, poor foolish bitch, maun stick
Aye to her master be't for weal or woe !)—
And look across to Braid all green with Spring,
And our auld Tower 'mang the wild Lammermuirs ;
—Let me review, as at my mother's knee
I knelt at sundown summer days lang syne,
And tellt to her and God the day's exploits ;
—Gin I had harried some poor cushat's nest,
Or wet, wading in Leader, my new.shoon !—
Let me review as under her true een
That aye in mine could read a lie or it
Was spoke,—and afore Him whose een search hearts,
The sad and troublous story of our days,
And our poor realm's maist gracious luckless Queen,
In England pent up now of wily Bess ;
There or to languish out her weary days,
Or by some swifter stroke to end them, best
As may fit the envious purpose nurst
In the fell heart of her great rival Queen !

—How yield the Castle to the Lords when weel
We wot with it her last forlorn hope dies ?
Sair I misdoubt no human skill may save,
—Yet maun the Captain go down with his ship,—

And good her Cause, or evil,—as saith John,—
 Baith Grange and I abide by it to death :
 Ay and in After-death to dree our weird,
 Gif sae be as John threips !¹—But there I doubt !—
 Not Mister John will be to deal with then,
 But Ane whose een search deeper,—as I think.
 Yet doubtless John speaks what is truth to him ;
 —Stern truth that breaks the auld man’s heart :—

nor yet

Wanting in show of reason :—Nae fool he,
 Auld Mister John ! yet blinded,—as I think,—
 By very greatness of his Cause. Sae great
 It looms afore him as God’s Cause were it
 Alane and nocht beside ;—what hinders it,
 Hurts God’s ; and sae maun be persuit to
 The death !—But wider to my thinking is
 God’s Cause, than “The Religion” as they name
 Their ain ;—(though as I think theirs be a part
 Of His—yet but a part ;) sae it may hap
 Our Cause as weel is His, spite Mister John !
 Seeing it is the Cause of this poor realm’s
 True lawful Queen, our gracious Mistress, eke²
 Forbye, (as weel may be, she innocent,)

¹ Reiterates.

² Besides.

A woman sair maligned and persecute.
“But she uphauds the Mass,” saith Mister John,
“In her ain private chapel, warning given
That wha shall be convict three times in that
Idolatrie maun die the death, wherefore
'Tis just the idolatress should die. Forbye,
Being idolatress, the case is sure
That she connivet with thae wicked wights
That blew the King in air at Kirk o' Field.”
—(Seeing he saith of me, 'tis sure I haud
God but a bogle of the nursery, else
How had I troublet sae the Kirk of God
Gif I believet ony God there were
Sic wickedness to punish by hell won,
Heaven tined ;¹—like parity of reason hath
He here :)—“Did she not move, the day afore,
Her ain good bed and put an ill one there?
From whilk the case is clear ;” quoth Mister John.
“Be there not letters eke frae her ain hand
Contriving with her paramour his death?
Then the deed done, the murdered man scarce cauld,
Or marryet on his bloody butcher ! What
Mair can ye need ? The Jezebel maun die !

¹ Lost.

The Queen of England righteously doth hold
 The murderess in bonds,—mair right should slay.”
 —Sae Mister John and all his preachouris !
 Yet bide a wee, good John, till we review
 Ilk count o’ the Indictment ! In good sooth,
 The Mass may be account idolatry,
 —And all men ken that sae I never spared
 To speak my conscience, uttering my mind
 In controversy of religion, be’t
 To Doctors of the Sorbonne or the Queen’s
 Ain Grace ;—and muckle need hath our poor realm,
 Be quit “ the Paip, that Pagan fu’ o’ pride,”
 With all his Pardoners, that give remit
 Of sins in auld sheepskins, and for a plack
 Letters of cursing to damn all that look
 Ower a man’s dyke, that better keep his corn
 Than sleepy loon with a three shilling fee,
 A sark and pair of new shoon ilka year !
 And Friars that sell the reek of purgatory
 For gold and lands !—Yet to my thinking that
 Doth nowise prove that He that made the Feast
 Doth will, that all, ower-rating of it sae
 As worship in the simple bread and wine,
 His ain maist blessed Body, should therefore

Be slain ! It seemeth me proof lacketh thee
 Somewhat in this count o' the Indictment, John !
 Sae much for proposition number one
 In Logic of the Schoolmen ! " All who hear
 Mass are Idolatries—Idolatries
 Should die—The Queen hears Mass—The Qu~~ee~~ⁿ
 is an
 Idolatress—The Queen should die." Meseems
 A vicious middle, Mister John ! Scarcely
 An axiom gif ye think on it ! Nor bears
 Head-mark of His commission, as I think
 Wha gives the Feast !

Let us then next discern,
 And strive to separate 'twixt false and true,
 In second count o' the Indictment, John !
 Harder and shrewder in its issues this,
 Since nane may say a murderer should live :
 'Tis *proof* wants here,—that found, the rest is clea~~r~~^r ;
 —Though even then much were there of excuse,
 To my poor thinking,—murder scarce a crime
 Avenging murder,—lawless justice mair.
 Yet grant ye that e'en murderers, poltroon
 And dastardly as that misgotten boy,

Whose feeble head her favours turned outright
Till nane might suffer his rank tyranny,
And “how be rid of him?” was ilk man’s cry,
Maun not be slain of private enterprise,
—How just soe’er their death,—else justice cries
“Life for a life.”

“Fain she were rid of him!”

How otherwise? In her ain person, she,
Queen though she be, suffered of him the maist
And warst indignities! Yet still her heart,
Maist womanlike—aye did relent gif he,
That sae mishandled, sorry were or sick;
And when the Lords, with me for spokesman, spake
Openly at Craigmillar of divorce,
The Queen, of her good Grace, still threiped he
might

Repent,—she would to France—and leastways, nocht
Maun be attempt, but sic as weel comports
With her pure honour, woman’s baith and Queen’s!
Not sic the manners to my thinking o’
A woman sick-infatuate with love,
And paramour to Bothwell!—the fell Earl
Whose lawless lust ruined baith her and us.

Ance wed,—ower true she would not leave ~~him~~ *in*
though,

—The night the Lords brought her to Edinburgh
From Carberry,—I pled, gif she would quit
Earl Bothwell she should yet have troth as true
And loyal as ere she had since she was Queen
Of Scotland :—But aye Mary Stuart did bear
A spirit high and proud ;—abuse and wrong,
Unto her purposes, or good or ill,
But welded her the closer ;—hard to fright,
Maist impotent to turn by force or threats !
The Lords had outraged her,—first put their hands
To help Earl Bothwell's boast he'd marry her,
“ Yea whether she herself would or would not ; ”
Syne, on pretence to free her frae the hauld
Of that maist bloody jailer,—risen in arms,
And when, at her ain will, at Carberry
She rendered her, brought her irreverent here,
And meanly lodget in the Provost's house
In the High Street ; (where 'twas I spake with *her*,
That self same day at e'en). The morrow's morn
Affixet a white banner in her sight,
Whereon was painted Henry lying dead
Beside the root of a green growing tree,

And her young prince kneeling upon his knees,
 Crying, his face and hands raised up to Heaven,
 “Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord !” Whereat
 She burst exceedingly in tears, praying
 Unto the folk against those Lords, for Christ
 His sake, to save her from their hands !—Less ill
 Even the bitter Earl, doubtless she thocht,
 Than sic fause-hearted knaves ! She would abide
 By the bad oath, his force and their worse fraud,
 Drew from her at God’s altar.—Wherefore ’twas,
 (To my poor thinking), that the Queen refused
 Bothwell to quit at bidding of the Lords.

With mine ain een saw I not the ill Bond
 At Ainslie’s Tavern the Lords subscrivt
 That bade her take James Hepburn for husband ?
 Was I not of her train on Saint Mark’s e’en
 When Bothwell seized her rein at Almond Bridge,
 And led, with her, his captive to Dunbar ?
 Where I abode in peril of my life,
 The doleful days when out-gait she fand nane
 Save marrying her ravisher ? Did I
 Not hear,—(she in a closet all alone
 With the fell Earl,)—her voice that called aloud

To give her knife wherewith to kill herself,
Sae the rude Borderer mishandled her?
And did not she, of her ain queenly grace,
Throw her royal self betwixt the Earl and me,
When he and Huntly fain had slain me there
Within the Queen's ain chamber; crying loud
To Huntly, gif hair of my head were hurt
He should be tint of lands and goods and life?
Ne'er can ye make me think, good Mister John,
Love 'twas that keepet her by Hepburn's side;
For weel ken I what love is!—These same days
Did not my heart sing in its prison-house
Beside her at Dunbar, daily in risk
Of life, only to know *my* Mary—mine
At last,—was waiting with wet een to give
Me welcome when an outgait I could find
To win at her?—Nae outgait wad I *frae*!
—Aye that was just what failet our poor Queen,
As she herself did write to France, she “fand
Nae outgait frae Earl Bothwell!”

Who can tell?

Mayhap an outgait had been found gif she
Had waited!—but hasty royal blood runs in

Her veins, and when insult or wrong gars 't flush
 Red to her brow, she tarries not, but strikes
 On the swift instant,—though her ain hand maim
 Her ain Cause maist ! Sae 'twas when wily Bess
 Trifled anent her marriage with the King.
 Marry she would, or witless be 't or wise !
 Yet not the foolish boy-face of my Lord
 Of Darnley, but the English Queen 'twas, fired
 Her blood ! Ay, time had I to woo my Mary,
 Quit of cares of State, for mony a day,
 Because ne'er weel my will was to the match !
 Alack ! she fand my judgement ower right then ;
 And sair I misdoubt right she finds it now,
 That I joined arms e'en with her foes the Lords,
 To save her frae Earl Bothwell !

Nor will I

Uphauld that at the first James Hepburn she
 Halely misliket ! 'Twas a man fearless
 And strong, gif reckless ; ane that aye had stood
 By the Queen's cause ; 'gainst Davie's murderers first,
 And syne against the misbegotten lad
 That tried his foolish will at ruling her,
 And her poor realm to boot ! and gif his way

To rid her of the last she might suspect
 Ower rough and ready, weel, to her might seem,
 Zeal but outran discretion!—’Twas the fell
 Earl’s courting days forbye, and gif his suit
 Were over vehement—a woman may
 Forgive ower fierce a flame herself hath kindled!——
 Not until wed, did the brute-beast beneath
 The courtier’s gloss break out in her fell lord.

“But what,” quoth Mister John, “of letters writ
 Wi’ her ain hand and found by Morton’s knave
 On George Dalglish, the Earl Bothwell’s man,
 Yon day of June, in Candlemaker Row?”
 Ay, gif ye prove me, John, thae letters writ
 In very deed by the Queen’s Grace ain hand,
 Nae mair can man or angel ere alledge
 She wist not of the deed of Kirk o’ Field.
 But wherefore, will ye tell me, was that same
 “Silver box owergilt with gold” fifteen months
 Keepet of my Lord Morton or word said?
 Nae tales tell dead men, John—and or word said,
 Dalglish had dreed his weird,—(as implicate
 In murder o’ the King)—could speak nor aye
 Nor no: nor in his deposition said,

—A man fronting his latter end,—he word
 Of that same “ silver box ower gilt with gold.”
 Nor was Sir James Balfour called to say
 Gif he had gien Earl Bothwell’s silver box
 To George Dalgleish for Morton’s knave to find !
 —“ Yet were the letters writ wi’ her ain hand ;”
 Threips Mister John.—Letters there were I grant
 Ay and sae writ,—letters and sonnettis
 And marriage bonds, a’ in that self same box !
 But wha for fifteen months had handlin o’
 The same ? Wha but my Lord of Morton, John ?
 And good occasion had he,—when the Lords
 Sacket her house of Holy Rood,—to lay
 His villain hands on much of privity
 Within the Queen’s ain chambers gif he would.
 What gif that same silver casket ower gilt,
 Held at the first *death-bond* not *marriage* ? Bond,
 —Not the Queen’s hand subscrivit but the Lords,
 Wi’ their ain hands ;—ruling the King should die ?
 “ Bond turned to ashes ” of the Lords since syne,
 As Drury wrote to Cecil ?—The Queen’s hand
 Of write doubtless was there, in letteris
 And sonnettis,—but nane subscrivit as
 They threip, no nor addrest, nor yet halely

Sae writ ;—sic French ne'er learnet she in France,
As doth bewray parts o' thae letteris
Be nane o' hers :—and wedded the ill French
Is aye wi' the ill meaning,—the good French
In sense simple and innocent ! And why
Showed they her not the letters as she craved,
Gif all were fair and straight ?—Wherefore might not
Cecil nor Drury see ?—Elizabeth,
(Though nane ower-warm her love as all men ken,)
E'en hauds thae letters for a forgery !
—Our lady Queen pit pen to paper in
Sic letters as that writ, as the Lords threip,
Frae Glasgow ? Liefer I'd believe 'twas writ
Wi' auld Nick's ain horn hoof !—and in good sooth,
Deil's work it is we hae here !—Where's that writ
Signed of the Queen, they vilely showed at York,
Wherein she bade the Lords subscribe the bond
That she should marry Bothwell ?—Showed at York,
With nane save Norfolk, Sussex, Sadler there ;
—At Westminster they daured not, lest their fraud
Should sit in eye of day ! When my Lord Moray,
—Shaming himself afore all honest men,—
Swearing he never would consent, consented
To lay the so-called letteris afore

The English peers, ne'er was sic warrant showed,
 —Nor could be,—since ne'er sic the Queen ere writ!
 What share in the base business Moray held,
 Halely I wot not;—yet let be! since syne
 Moray hath stood afore another Judge
 To render up his record; sae let be!
 Ay, and or lang the Secretaire maun stand
 Likewise at that tribunal with his count;
 (Sae this sickness grows, that “Mitchell Wylie's
 Sair feet” full soon will land him in his grave :)
 —And there anent, good Mister John hath nae
 Assurance ere it shall be weel!—Ay John,
 Yet mayhap thine assurance matters not
 Sae muckle as ye think afore that Judge!
 —Yet is the auld man gentler at the heart
 Than his stern words—and very pitiful
 Of Grange and me! Sae go thy way in peace,
 Auld John, and since thyself maun stand
 First, (as it seems,) at that great Judgement-seat,
 The Judge look pitiful on thee that day,
 As thou on Grange and me,—nor turn deaf ear
 Unto thy pleas as thou unto thy Queen's!
 —Gif she have faults, (as weel myself doth ken,)
 What mortal is, hath none? Gif crimes, mayhap,

(Though that I mair misdoubt,) be justly laid
Unto her door, that Judge when her day comes
Meseems, will bear Him gentlier than thou,
Good Mister John—remembering Him o'
The tender brows of the six-days lass-bairn
That bode¹ to wear our prickly thistle-crown,
And baby-hand kings fought for in its cradle :
The Guises' court in merry France about
Her pliant years ; smooth Cardinal Uncles,
Soft-voiced nuns that won her maiden heart
For Rome,—their ane true Church, all else accurst
And damned,—and bowed her soul's young reverence
About with glamour of the gorgeous rites,
Slow swinging incense censors, and soft sounds
That change the dim kirk aisles to gates of Heaven,
In the auld faith.—How might she thole, sae trained,
Wild nobles, homespun dight in webs their ain
Sheep grew on their ain heather hills, and spun
On their ain wheels by the right noble hands
Of their ain wives and daughters, winter eens
In chimney nooks of their ain auld peel Towers ?
—Rough-spoken wights that even the sweet grace
Of her fair face withheld not frae fierce looks,

¹ Must.

—**N**ay in her very sight frae blows and blood !
Stern preachouris, (all things misliking them,)
In Sanct Giles' Kirk railing at what they ca'd
“ Tarjetting of her tails ”—Good Mister John
Dieving¹ her wondering ears with “ Trumpet blasts
Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women,”
And wha's maist civil word was, gif she wad
Mind weel his bidding, as content were he
To live beneath her Grace as Paul 'neath Nero !

—Alack ! alack ! what outgait had she *ere*
The dauntless ill-starred lass, with her fair face
And queenly gracious ways ?—What wisest wit
And truest heart had proved sufficient for
Sic need ? What outgait ere, since a lass-bairn
She lay in her Linlithgow cradle while
Her heart-broke sire, turning his dying face
To Falkland Palace wall, with last breath gasped,
“ Wi' lass it came, and wi' a lass will go.”
—Outgait was nane,—a' her life through, frae mair
Than fell Earl Bothwell ! Ay, what outgait now
Frae wily England ? Nane, her Secretaire,
—Aye true to her though aft misdoubted,—sees :

¹ Deafening.

Nae outgait back to her ain Kingdom here,
Only a red road into Kingdom Come !

Ay, will we haud her Maiden Castle, John,
Auld Grange and I, (ay, and this foolish fond,
Poor woman-hearted messan on my knee !—)
Her red flag still afloat on David's Tower
Here sit I,—helpless hulk,—good Mister John,
With her Cause, good or ill, to stand or fa',
Weel be't for us or ill, or here or Hence.
—Ilk Captain maun abide by his ain ship !

Sae muckle was subscrivit with his hand,
Good Mistress Seton. Syne the cannon came
—Shippit frae Berwick at fause England's word ;—
(Auld Mister John had gane to his account
Or that befell :)—and or the first May moon
Had reached the full, were stellit ¹ round the walls ;
Great Royal Cannon, muckle culverins,
Pott-pieces full two score, in the Kirk-yard

¹ Planted.

O' the Grey Friars, and by Saint Cuthbert's Kirk,
 And Mr Thornton's Lodging, the West Port,
 Ay and full far afield 'yont the Nor' Loch.
 (Never the Lords had taen the Castle but ¹
 Wily England's aid !—God help our Lamb
 That 'neath her cruel claw's mercy lieth yet !)
 —Nigh on a month mair floated the red flag
 On David's Tower,—but syne the bonny spring
 Of rinning water 'yont the Castle wall
 Was cuttet aff ;—the well inside choket
 With ruins ;—and for thirst they bode to yield.

Ye wot the rest, good Mistress Seton,—How,
 With auld Kirkcaldy, my dear Lord was brought
 Doun frae the Castle through the rabble rout,
 (Mad that their houses in the siege were spoiled,)
 That jeered and jibbed,—and of fause England gien
 Ower to the Regent,—their maist wicked foe.

At four hours of the afternoon, auld Grange
 They hanget ower the Castle wall :—men threip
 His face turned round to hing against the sun
 As Mister John Knox had foresaid,—truly,

¹ Without.

I wot not, aye or no.—The Secretaire,
My ain dear Lord, doubtless had likewise fared,
But for the auld disease of his sair feet,
That spared the bloody wark ;—and scarce could I
Win decent hiding for his blessèd banes,
—Sic kindness hath the Regent for living
Or dead !—till for the very shame England
Gart bury him !—My dear Lord is with God,
Where Morton cannot harm nor England sell.
—Hers be His pity, yet in their ill power,
Our mournful maist sweet Queen, of England pent !

II.

NOVEMBER 1572 A.D.

Within his house in the Canongate hard by the Netherbow.

JOHN KNOX, servant of Jesus Christ, with my
 Dead hand but a glad heart, awearie o'
 The world, and looking daily to resolve
 My earthly tabernacle ; heart'ly I
 Salute and so of all the Faithful take
 My leave, desiring earnestly the help
 Of their good prayers, that thus without any
 Noteworthy slander to the Evangile
 Of Jesus Christ I now may end my battle ;
 For as the world of me is weary, so
 Am I of it ; yea I have taken my
 Good-night of it ; and so commit all things
 To God.

Yet ne'ertheless to me it seems

A thing the most unreasonable, that
 In this my auld decrepit age I be
 Compelled to fight shadows and howlets that
 Dare not abide the light ;—an auld man
 That scarce goes, hylie and fear,¹ frae Sanct Giles' Kirk
 To his ain door hard by the Netherbow ;
 About his neck furring of martricks, staff
 In the ane hand and holding up the other
 Oxter good godly Richart Ballenden !

Yet one thing in the end there is I may
 Not pretermit, that is to give to him
 A lie within his throat, who either dare
 Or will say that ever I sought support
 Against my native Country. Albeit
 That this unthankful age wits not, what I
 Have been unto my Country, ages yet
 To come shall witness to the truth.

I grant,

And mind not to deny, that I have prayed
 God to oppone His power unto the pride
 Of that most wicked woman, murderess
 Of her own husband ; one who hath whoredom

¹ Slowly and cautiously.

Committed and most vile adulteries,
 The mother of all mischief in this realm.
 Yet railing none may prove against me, till
 Isay, Eseckial, Jeremy, and Saint Paul
 They first compel recant, of whom I learned
 Boldly to call wickedness by its name,
 “ A fig a fig, a spade a spade.” I fear
 Isay his threatening, “ Woe unto them
 That call light darkness, and the darkness light ;
 Good evil, and the evil good.”

Let them

It imprecation call as pleaseth them,
 Or execration, I praise God He hath
 Offer than once, stricken and shall strike, in
 Despite of man, defend her who so list.

Yet one thing rests to me most bitter, ay,
 Most fearful, (if their accusation so
 Prove my accusers,) to wit, that I claim
 Entrance into God’s secret counsel, as
 Thereunto I were called, (on whom may God
 Have mercy for their rash ungodly judgement,)
 How fearful is my conscience, and aye so
 Hath been, the bounds of my vocation to

Exceed, they had not so accused me had
They known. Well know I God's secrets pertain
To Him alone, but things His Law reveals,
To us and to our children. What I spake
Gainst that most wicked woman's murder, pride,
Adultery and idolatry, I spake,
Not as one in God's secret counsel, but
As one, of His great mercy, called to preach
According to His blessèd will revealed
In His most holy Word. Ofter than once
Have I pronounced the threatenings of His Law
'Gainst all of counsel, knowledge or consent
To shed innocent blood, that death they meet
Not,—so the Plague be stayed from this poor realm,
(Which never shall be while that she and they
Remain unpunishèd).

Likewise wherein
I am accused of intromeddling things
Profane and civil with the Word of God,
I answer, when by written truth of God
They show reproof of vice a thing profane
And civil, (which till morn after Doomsday
Will not be,) then as God's Word commands me,
So shall I do.

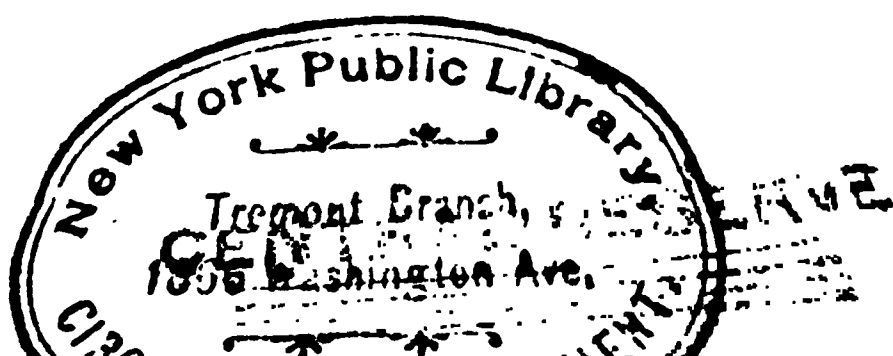
Their railing I deny,
 Their sovereign I know not ; let God's will
 Be done in me ; so have I laid my compt !
 —And thus require I all that aught have to
 Oppone against me, plainly to do it,
 As I myself and all my doings make
 Open to all the world.

My Brethren call
 For me, that God of His great mercy may
 Be pleased to put an end to this my long
 And painful battle ; unfit now to fight
 As He sometime gave strength, I thirst an end ;
 To be released from this body of sin,
 Assured to rise in glory.—Yet
 Let my desire be moderate of Thy
 Good Spirit Lord !

My sun goes down in darkness. This poor
 realm

A ship without a rudder in the midst
 Of storms ; a flock without a pastor ! Let
 Thy Providence watch and defend us, Lord,
 Thir dangerous days, that so the world may see,
 As well without the help of man as with

G



It, Thou art able to defend and rule
The little flock depending upon Thee.

Oh Lord, what we shall add we know not ! In
Our miseries extreme we called, and Thou
In multitude of Thy great mercies heard,
And first delivered us from tyranny
Of strangers merciless, next from the bonds
Of vile idolatry, last from the yoke
Of that most wicked woman ; in her place
Appointing for her young son's infancy,
A Regent with such grace endued, even
The Devil can in nought justly accuse,
Excepting in this only that in him
A foolish pity did too far prevail
Concerning punishment and execution
Which Thou commandedst to be made on her
And her accomplices.

What misery, Lord,
Found he within this realm, and to what rest
And quietness brought !—Thine image did in him
So clearly shine, the Devil, nor ill men,
(To whom he is the Prince,) could not abide
It, so to punish us who did not right

Esteem so great a gift, to our great grief,
 Thou hast permitted him to fall by hands
 Of cruel and treatorous murderers. Ay, e'en
 While he lay cauld within Holyrood House,
 (Or we with dolorous and heavy hearts
 Within Sanct Giles's Kirk had laid his dear
 And murdered corps,) the Devil (he of lies
 The father,) found a penman meet for him,
 Who feigned that he in conferring owerheard,
 (He hid within a bed,) Lindsay, John Wood,
 The Laird of Pitterow, Master MacGill,
 The Tutor of Moncur and me, the crown
 Offer to Moray, who to underlie
 Its burden gave consent ; whilk conference
 Ne'er was !—and so its ill contriver shall
 Die in a strange land, but a friend nearby,
 To hold his head up ;—so am I assured.

He is at rest, O Lord ! and we are left
 In misery extreme.—Thirsting an end,
 For all pleasures and friendships of this world
 I care not now.

Yet all a long day I
 Desired to send yet once to warn yon man

Within the Castle whom so dearly I
Have loved, and bid him, in the name of God
To leave that evil Cause and render up
The Castle, and gif not he shall be brought
Down ower the walls of it with shame, and hing
Against the sun ;—so God assures me. Yet
(Of his great God, the Secretaire doubtless
Advised,) his mocking answer was, “Go tell
Ye Mister Knox he’s but a drytting prophet.”
—Anent these twa men earnest with my God
Have I been,—for the one, sorry I am
That so it shall befall, yet for his soul,
Of mercy God assures me, nae warrant
Have I for the other e’er it shall
Be weel.

Not so, langsyne, when Maitland sat
With Dun in James Syme’s house, from these poor lips
To drink Christ’s blest Evangile, unto all
Seeming, (despise the wilful wit that aye
Loved fence and parry), vessel full of grace,
Whose dexterous tongue brought safely through
 matters
Of moment gladly trusted him, and won

England's help for The Congregation ! Not
 Thus, when in Sanct Andros' Sea-tower I
 Read in Saint John's Evangile with my bairns,
 (Langniddry's boys and Arniston's), and he,
 (The man now in the Castle), and the rest
 Taen in the godly fact of that sworn foe
 Of Jesus Christ, and bloody butcher called
 Archbishop Beaton's slaughter, sat with us.
 And so did God help His weak soldier that
 Not only all they in the Castle but
 Many without, did openly profess
 At the Lord's Table those things that he taught.

Within the Castle was the Pest : without
 French Galayes twenty-one upon the sea,
 Yet though they shot two days and dang the sclattes,¹
 Of houses, neither slew they man nor hurt
 The walls : so nothing Santa Barbara,
 (Their gunner's goddess,) helped them, for rowers,
 (Men to the galayes chained,) many they lost,
 And soldiers likewise. Yet when they within
 The Castle bragged of this their victory,
 And thickness of their walls, aye was this said

¹ Broke the slates.

John Knox of other judgement, for he said,
They saw not what he saw,—their corrupt life
Could not escape the punishment of God.
“England will rescue us,” they vaunted, but
Said John, “Ye shall not see them, but shall be
Carried to a strange land,”—as it befell.

Much am I minded now in this my auld
Decrepit age to look back and rehearse
How at the very first, in this poor realm
Of Scotland, the light of Christ's Evangile
Hath been made manifest, after that whole
And horrible defection from the Truth
Through snares of the false Roman Antichrist :
How mercifully God looked on this realm,
Therein retaining some spunk of His light
Even in the time of its most deepest dark ;
With what mine eyes have seen of that same war
Which God commanded Israel against
The Canaanites, wherein contract of peace
There never can be made while virtue is
Contemned, and vice extolled ; Idolatries,
And idle bellies, bloody tyrants called
Bishops maintained ; and Christ's true messengers

Be persecute and slain. Whilk righteous war,
Nor God nor Nature, nor just Law forbid.
—“ Beware of the false prophets, by their fruits
Shall ye know them.”—Yea true it is that works
Make us nor good nor ill, yet aye good tree
Good fruit doth bear, and ill tree evil fruit.

But to our history. Of homely folk,
(As commonly God useth for to call
The simple sort His summons till express),
On the Earle Bothwell's lands at Gifford Gate,
By Haddington, opened my een first on
This troublous world. Father, Grandsire, Goodsher,¹
All served my Lord's forebears,² and of mine own
Some died beneath their standards, wherefore I
A good mind bore unto their House as fits
Our Scottish kindness, and gif he, umquhile
Our Jesabel Mistress who foully wed,
Otherly³ had in godliness abode
He had had command of me as boldly
As of any ; but as women and gold
From the beginning have corrupted all
Worldly and fleshly men, so did they him.

¹ Mother's father.

² Ancestors.

³ Otherwise.

My mother was a Sinclair, (whilk surname,
In times of trouble I myself have writ ;)
A woman wise and godly, keeping aye
Thir darksome days, yet some spunk of God's light
Alive within her heart. Devout was she,
(Though in the gloaming of her soul there shined
Only through windows painted of the Pope
God's truth). Sabbaths and Saints' days aye to Mass
In the Fransciscan's great Kirk called the Lamp
Of Lothian, she led my brother Will
And me, and aye at bedtime when we sought
Her and our father's blessing, laid her hand,
Hard with house-labour, softly on our heads,
And prayed "Christ and His mother in the fear
Of God to keep her callants ;" and since I
Was quick at the Dame's school, at the Grace Book,
The Prymer, and Plane Donat, (as they said,)
I must have "perfyt Latin," and be Priest,
Halely God's servant, so.

Yet nowise blind

Was she ; weel I remember how a fire
Would lighten in her een, and the hot blood
Redden her cheek when men spake liberally
Of greediness of priests and friars, who bode

To have the korps-cloth and the dead man's cow,
Though bairns and widow went but claithes and
meat.

Or gossip's tale how that a prelate, (ane
Of Bothwell's house,) a merry bourd,¹ one night
At supper told, asking his gentlemen
Whilk truest served the King of Love, and when
They each had spoke, himself truest declared
By a round dozen,—seven of them men's wives;—
Or Friar William Arth bade honest men
That loved their wives and daughters haud them frae
The Chapels of our Ladye of Karsgrange,
For gif they knew the miracles there kythed²
Neither God nor our Ladye would they thank!

Yet must I wear God's livery and be Priest:
So from the Dame's to Burgh School I went,
And four good pennies Scots my father paid
Termly, that I might win, (from early morn
To even's gloaming toiling ower my books,)
Logic and “perfyte Latin.” To Glasgow
Next, one Crispin's Day, with thirteen more
For Major's Dialectic and some Greek.

¹ Tale.

² Hatched.

What need rehearse the after days of dark,
That to my shame and sorrow I abode,
Tutor and Priest at Samuelston ; ay, ane
Of that most bloody butcher's regiment
James Beaton Bishop of Sanct Andros, though
Mine ears had heard and my heart quaked to
hear

His spite, when the bright beams of the true light,
Whilk God had of His grace planted within
The heart of Maister Patrick Hamilton,
First publicly burst forth.

Weel mind I how

My mother's face waxed pale, when the ill news
By a Black Friar was brought to Gifford Gate,
(Ane Alexander Seyton, who for fear
Departed afterward from this poor realm,)
How in Sanct Andros, (lamb among the wolves,)
God's innocent servant he saw stand bound
In midst of coals and timber for a fire,
(Whilk fire was slow and so his torment more,)
And how ane, Campbell, a Black Friar cried,
"Convert, call on our Lady, heretic !"
Whom he appealed to the Tribunal Seat
Of Jesus Christ : (whilk Friar as ane despaired

And in a phrensy, did this life depart,
 Few days thereafter.) Likewise how he gave
 His long-time chamber-child his gown, his coit,
 Bonnet and sic-like garments, saying, “These
 In the fire will not profit, thee they may :
 For after this of me thou canst nothing
 Receive save the example of my death,
 The whilk, albeit bitter to the flesh,
 Yet is it entrance to eternal life.”
 —And so after long sufferance got he
 The victory.

Yet when those cruel wolves
 Had clean devoured their prey, (as they supposed,)
 They found themselves in worse case than before !
 For none in the whole realm but who began
 To ask why Maister Patrick Hamilton
 Was brunt. God likewise of His grace reserved
 A little treatise by this Patrick made,
 (Whilk if ye list call “Patrick’s Places,”) where
 Ye have the pith of all Divinity.
 And so within short space many began
 To call in doubt that which before they held
 For sure, and smell somewhat the verity ;

And when these cruel beasts again conferred
Of other sic-like murders in this realm,
John Lindsay then, (a merry gentleman
Familiar to the Bishop, standing by,)
Quoth he, “ My Lord, gif ye will burn any mo
Let them be brunt in cellars, for the reek
Of Maister Patrick Hammylton infects
As many as it blew upon.”

Yet I

Brooding abode long time in Samuelston,
Teaching my bairns, and to my endless shame
In that most vile idolatry the Mass
Doing mine office in the chapel there ;
Ane of these bloody butchers’ regiment
Of darkness.

Yet, in silence of mine house
Ower Jerome’s words, and holy Augustine’s,
(With lurid glitter of the fires lit up,
Aye and anon, in whilk these cruel wolves
Baith men and women caused to be devoured,
Wha dared oppone God’s light to their Kingdom
Of Darkness,) some spunk of God’s truth kindled
Within my heart, yet ne’er burst forth in flame,
Until Maister George Wishart,—that great saint

Of God,—for some short season lodged within
 Hugh Douglas’ house in Langniddry, (wherein
 I, teaching his bairns, abode,) whose face was
 Unto me God’s blessèd torch of truth
 That kindled all, and banishèd for aye
 The Pope’s kingdom of darkness frae my soul.

Aye had I waited on him carefully
 Since he was come to Lothian, and that
 Last night in Haddington, before he passed
 To sermon, (where the auditure was small,
 The Earl Bothwell, by the Cardinal’s
 Procurement inhibiting baith town
 And country,) he sent for said John entering
 In purpose that he wearied of the world,
 For he perceived that men began of God
 To weary ; and departing, took good night
 Of all his friends as ’t were forever ; I,
 The said John, pressing to have gone with him,
 He answered, “ Nay, return unto your bairns
 And may God bless you, one is sufficient
 For one sacrifice.” So from the said John
 He caused be taen the sword twa-handed whilk
 With the said Maister George used to be borne,

Who obeyed, (albeit sadly,) and so
With Hew Douglas returned to Langniddry.

Upon that self-same night, passed Maister George,
(The frost being vehement,) to Ormiston
On foot ; and supper done, he comfortable
Purpose held of God's own children's death.
Then after singing of Psalm fifty-first
In Scottish metre, to his chamber passed,
Saying "God grant quiet rest." Or midnight came
The Earle Bothwell, and calling for the Laird
Told him 'twas vain to make him hold his house,
For Cardinal and Governor with all
Their power were coming, but gif he to him
Would render Maister George he should be safe,
And it should pass power o' the Cardinal
To do him skaith.¹ Nevertheless when gold
Largely the Cardinal gave, the Queen Regent
Promise of favours in my Lord's love suits,
Gif he would render up said Maister George
In Edinburgh Castle to be kept,
Though at the first, by reason of his word
He some resistance made, not long, a man

¹ Harm.

Effeminate withstands a gracious Queen !
 So was God's servant taen to Edinburgh,
 Where he abode not many days, that wolf
 The Cardinal so travailing that or long
 Within the Sea-tower of Sanct Andros he
 God's blessèd martyr gat into his power.

There, on first day of March, the fire was made,
 And gallows at the Castle's western part
 Near to the Priory, (the ordinance bent
 Right 'gainst the place, lest Maister George should of
 His friends be rescued.) Then sat the Hangman
 Down on his knees and said, “I pray you, Sir,
 Forgive me, for not I am guilty of
 Your death.” “Come hither to me,” then said he,
 And kissed his cheek. “Lo, here a token is
 That I forgive you ; my heart, do thine office.”
 And so was hanged and then to powder brent ;
 So that the people who beheld the great
 Tormenting of that Innocent might not
 Withhold from piteous mourning of the slaughter
 Of that Lamb ; and in plain speech men began
 To damn and to detest the cruelty used,
 And openly at table to avow

The blood of Maister George should be avenged
Among whom, chiefly John Leslie spared not
To say "This same whinger," (showing his dirk,)
"Shall be Priest to the Cardinal." Who yet
Thought himself for all Scotland stout yneuch
In his new Block-house!—(And the truth to write=
Most part of the Nobility had given
Their band of manrent or else promises
Of amity with him!) He only feared
Them into whose hands God delivered him;
And for them he had laid so secretly
His nets, he deemed their feet could not escape.
Yet all did fail!

Early on Saturday,
Of May the twenty-ninth, (ane had espied,
By privy postern shortly to depart
From him, his mistress Marion Ogilvie,)
Came said John Leslie, Normound, Leslie's son,
The young Kirkcaldy, Peter Carmichael
(A stout gentleman,) James Melvin likewise,
An old familiar friend to Maister George,
And finding the draw-brig let down and yetts¹
Open for lime and stones, (his Babylon

¹ Gates.

Was almost finished,) frae the porter rived
 The keys and cast him in the foss ; then Grange,
 (Fearing the fox should have escaped,) took guard
 O' the Privy Postern. The Cardinal,
 Hearing the shouts, gat his twa-handed sword,
 And garte his chamber-child cast kists² before
 His door, but when they laid a chimney-full
 Of burning coal unto it, then they oped.
 The Cardinal, sitting him in a chair,
 "I am a Priest, I am a Priest," he cried,
 "Ye will not slay me." Then said John Leslie,
 As he had vowed, first struck him once or twice,
 Thereafter Peter ; but James Melvin, (one
 Of nature most gentle and modest,) said,
 Withdrawing them, "Though it be secret, yet
 This work of God and judgement ought to be
 With greater gravity ;"—then showing him
 His sword's point, "Repent thee thy wicked life,
 Especially the shedding of the blood
 Of Maister George Wishart, which albeit
 The flame of fire consumed, yet vengeance cries
 Upon thee, and we here are sent from God
 It to avenge. For here before my God

¹ Tore.

² Boxes.

Do I protest that neither hatred of
 Thy person, love of thy riches, nor fear
 Of any trouble thou to me couldst do,
 Move me to strike thee, but only because
 Thou hast been and remain'st an enemy
 Against Christ Jesus and His Evangile."
 And so with a stout sword he struck him through.
 And thus he fell ; never a word heard but,
 "I am a Priest, I am a Priest, fy, fy,
 All's gone !" And so, (since May waxed hot,) ~~they~~
 gave
 Him salt yneuch, a cope of lead, and neuk
 In bottom of the Sea-tower, to await
 What exequies his brethren Bishops would
 Prepare. For dolorous unto the priests,
 The Governor, and chiefly to the Queen,
 The death of the aforesaid tyrant was ;
 Who bode revenge his death ; therefore besieged
 The Castle of Sanct Andros where were hid
 They who of his slaughter had compassèd
 The godly fact ; where to them shortly came
 This said John Knox (with him Langniddry's bairns
 And Ormeston's,) and so his lot was cast ;
 For reading daily in the chapel there

Saint John's Evangile with his bairns, anon,
 They of the place—but 'specially these two,
 To wit Henry Balnaves and John Rough
 Preacher, perceiving of his doctrine, would
 He should upon him take the preaching place,
 Which utterly did he refuse and said,
 “Where God had called him not he would not run,”
 Whereupon they privily 'mongst themselves,
 Concluded publicly to give a charge
 To the said John, through their said Preacher's
 mouth,
 Which did the said John Rough, charging in name
 Of God and Christ His Son, that he refuse
 Not this vocation, as he tendered,
 God's glory, increase of Christ His Kingdom,
 And comfort of the Brethren ; whereat John
 Abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears,
 And got him to his chamber. From that day
 His countenance sufficiently declared
 The grief and trouble of his heart, for none
 Saw any sign of mirth in him, nor yet
 Pleasure in company of any man,
 Until the day necessity caused him
 Express his mind in public preaching-place,

In answer to that rotten Papist, Dean
John Annan,—and so after that got rest.

On July penult was the Castle taen
Of Leon Strozzi, Capua's Prior,
Of the French Galayes Captain, (promise made
Of safe transport to all within the same ;)
—Then was there singing of this triumph song,
“ Priestis content you now, Priestis content you now,
For Normound and his company has filled the
Galayes fou.”

Whilk then passed up the waters of the Seine,
And lay before Rowane, whence we who looked
For freedom traitorously were scatterèd ;
Some into diverse prisons and some more,
(Of whom was this said John,) sentenced to row
Chained at the Galaye's oar. (For that the Pope
Had writ thanking the Governor and King
Of France right heartily for taking pains
T' avenge his most kind creature, Cardinal
Of Scotland, and praying they of the Castle
Be sharply handled.) Wherefore nineteen months
I, the said John, rowed in the Galayes.—God
Doth know the sobs of my poor heart !

The winter through at Nantes in Brittany
 We lay ; Threatened with torments gif we would
 Not reverence pay unto the Messe, yet not
 The poorest of that company thereto
 Consented ; yea, when on the Saturday
 At night they sang their “Salve Regina,”
 The whole Scotsmen put on their hats and hoods ;
 And after once, they were not pressed to kiss
 The painted board which they call “Nostre Dame,”
 For thus the chance : Just we had come to Nance,
 Their great Salve was sung and glorious
 Gay painted Lady to be kissed was brought ;
 Then one, (a Scotsman,) there chained, gently
 said,
 “Trouble me not, such idol is accursed,
 I will not touch it ;” then said they, “Thou shalt
 Handle it,” so thrust it into his face,
 Who seeing the extremity, took it
 Advisedly, and in the river cast,
 Saying, “Let now our Lady save herself,
 She’s light yneuch, then let her learn to swim ;”
 So after that no Scottishman was urged
 To that idolatry.

In Scotland there

Was nought but mirth that summer, for all went
At pleasure of the priests, yet not for long ;
For first the English came, and fought at Pinkie ;
(Of Scottish men there lay ten thousand slain
'Twixt Edinburgh and Dalkeith ;) syne came
The French ships, (flying our Scottish Lion
How soon so ever they took the plain seas,
And so to France accounted rebels, since
Peace stood 'twixt France and England,—no falset ~~—~~ =!
Such policy 'twixt princes !). Then was held
A Parliament of the whole realm within
Haddington Abbey, anent, in chief,
The marriage of our Princess, (spite contract
To young King Edward,) with the King of France ~~—~~ e.
Some were with bribes corrupted, some deceived
By flattering promises, and some by fear
Compelled were to consent. The governor
Got Order of the Cockill and Duchy
Of Chattellerault, so he stood content
To sell his Sovereign forth of his own hands,
Which will be his destruction at the end.
Huntly, Ergyle, and Angus likewise were
Made of the Cockill Knights, and shortly none
Resisted that unjust demand.—So was

She sold to France that in her youth she should
 Drink of that liquor that remains with her
 Her life-time, for a plague to all this realm
 And to her own destruction.

But to return.

In the same gallaye with the said John Knox
 Was Mister John Balfour who oft-times would
 Ask of his judgement if he thought e'er they
 Should be delivered, whose answer aye was,
 “God would deliver them from that bondage
 Even in this life.” And when the second time
 The Galayes came to Scotland, lying 'twixt
 Sanct Andros and Dundee, and the said John
 So sick that few hoped for his life, he willed
 Him look gif he might know the land, who said
 “Yes, weel I know it, for I here can see
 The steeple of that place where first God oped
 My mouth in public to His glory ; yea
 And weel assured I am, how weak soe'er
 I now appear that I shall not depart
 This life till that my tongue shall glorify
 His godly name in the same place.” As was,
 Of the said Mister James, reputed years

Before that ever the said John again
Set foot in Scotland.

Meantime Kirkcaldy,
(The man now in the Castle,) Carmichael
And the Leslies, held in Mont Sanct Michael,
Of the said John asked counsel gif they might
Break prison with safe conscience, whilk said John
Gif without blood of any spilt, affirmed.
And so on the King's Eve,—when Frenchmen use
Liberally to drink,—by a boy's help
They gat the keys, and binding those within,
Steeked all the doors upon them, and so went ;
Harm done to no man. As poor mariners
In beggars' garments travelling many weeks,
At length they got a French ship and so came
To England, where they found before them this
Said John, who likewise that same winter was
Set free, God's time for the deliverance
Of His poor servant being come.

Henceforth

The Kirk and this poor Realm knoweth right well
My course of life, for ne'er have I, for fear
Of men or favour, stinted so to speak
As God gave me commandment. At Berwick,

Newcastle then, and London and the South,
Until the dolourous death of that young Prince
Most virtuous and godly, whose wisdom
And gravity all expectation passed,
And yet exceeded he not sixteen years ;
Whose death all godly within Europe mourned.
Satan intending nothing less than that
The light of Jesus Christ be quite put out
In this whole Isle of Britain,—after him,
In God's hot anger, in England arose
Mischievous Mary of the Spaniards' blood,
Crue! persecutrix of God's people there ;
And in Scotland that crafty practiser
Called Mary of Lorraine, Queen-Regent named
Of Scotland.—Wherefore passed the said John Knox
Unto Geneva and to Frankfort thence,
(At call of God's most notable servant
John Calvin,) to the congregation there,
Thence to Dieppe, and so to Scotland back.

There on first day of Januar by past,
Up on all gates and ports of Friars here
Within this realm, was fixed “The Beggars' Warning,”
Whilk, “in the name of all the Blind, Bedrelles,

Widows, Orphins, and Poor who might not work,
 Demanded from the flocks of all the Friars
 Restitution or next Whitsunday's Feast
 For wrongs bypast, and swift removal forth
 Their Hospitals, wrongously held by them,
 Though for the Poor, (whilk they are not,) biggit
 And dottit,¹ and gif not, them to eject
 Utterly forth the same, at that said Term."

And so began that war, wherein this realm
 Well knows how manifold my labours for
 Christ and His Evangile, fighting against
 That Idol of the Mass ; (more fearful was
 That one Mass unto me, permitted to
 Our Queen in her ain private chapel, than
 Gif armèd enemies ten thousand were
 Here landed to suppress the whole religion !
 "Conscience, Conscience," they cried, "a sore thi
 'tis

The Conscience to constrain," to whilk I said,
 "Her liberty should be their thraldom or
 'Twas long ;" (as well of late their malice hath
 Been shown by that cruel murderer the King

¹ Built and gifted.

Of France, none from whose loins proceeding shall
 Enjoy his throne in peace). Likewise against
 These idle bellies, Black Friars and Gray ;
 And those most bloody butchers, Bishops called ;
 And for maintaining God's true Messengers,
 And Preachers of His Word ; right ordering
 Of His poor Kirk ; and godly upbringing
 In learning of its bairns within the schools ;
 This realm well knows, nor may I here and now
 Recount the same. Only I thank my God,
 By my poor means, some spunk of His true Light,
 (How dimmed soe'er,) doth shine in this poor realm,
 And more shall shine, though these een see it not.

An auld decrepit man I thirst an end.
 Long time since hath my God taen Marjory Bowes,
 My first dear bedfellow, and that honest
 Poor gentlewoman, my good friend, her mother.
 The dear fruits of her bosom, our two sons,
 With this my younger yoke-fellow and these
 Our little lasses, leave I to His care,
 With you good friends who gather these last days,
 Here in my house hard by the Netherbow,
 Since that last Sunday when in Sanct Giles' Kirk

To Lawson I rendered mine office up,
And, (having told the Rising of our Lord,)
Crept down the High Street on good Richart's arm,
All my poor flock following to my door.

Go wife, bid pierce for us a cask of wine ;
—Send for it oft, good friends, while it shall last,
For never will I tarry till 't be drunk.
On earth is no stability save the Kirk
Of Jesus Christ, aye fighting 'neath His Cross,
To whose mighty protection heart'ly I
Commit you.

And so Lord Jesus I commend
My troubled spirit into Thy defence,
Thy troubled Kirk unto Thy mercy.—Now
Wife, go read where first I cast mine anchor.

III.

At Fotheringay.—*February* 8, 1587 A.D.

“MAYHAP,” I said, that night of fog I sat
Till dawn upon my galley’s deck to catch
At day’s first streak, one farewell glimpse of France,
(Whence, even as I sailed, a ship with all
Its crew, before our eyes, and close to port
Went down ;),—“Mayhap that casualty,” (by hands
Of England’s Queen to die), “were better than
To live, yet in this God’s good will be done.”
And now it is God’s will sae best for me.

Last night I had but doffed my mantle when
Cometh the Lord Beale to my chamber door
Desiring speech with me, whereon, donning
The same, I bade them open ; thereupon

Saluting with most dolesome face he said,
“Madame, I would some other one than I
Had brought such evil tidings on the part
Of England’s Queen, yet as her servant must
I needs obey, and sae admonish you
To hold you ready on the morrow at
The tenth hour of the morning to endure
Sentence of death on you pronounced some time
Agone.”

I praise and thank my God that sae
It pleaseth Him to put an end by this
To all the miseries that they have caused
Me to endure this nineteen years, e’en to
This present time ;—a prisoner evilly
Entreated of this Queen, my sister ;—ne’er,
As God is my chief witness, having done
Aught hurtful to her. Now I go to give
Into His hands my spirit ; innocent
And pure, and conscience-clear before His
Majesty divine of all the crimes
Whereof she causèd me to be accused ;
And I shall carry now this innocence
Boldly before His face who is the sole
Judge of my actions.

There when I present
 Myself openly will I make me known ;
 Sae better far for me than to live on
 In this same martyrdom wherein sae lang
 To languish they have made me without hope ;
 (Knowing the evil nature of this Queen,
 Her mortal hate and constant cruelty
 To me,) who now to please her councillors
 And other of my ancient foes doth will
 My ruin and my death ; which patiently
 I shall be seen to suffer, that I may
 Reign,—if it sae please God,—perpetually,
 Delivered from their persecutions in
 A happier resting-place than I have had
 The best part of my days.—Since she is bent
 Upon such rigour, let God’s will be done !

My Father, my Creator and my God,
 And Jesus Christ, His only Son, my Lord
 And my Redeemer, hope of all who live,
 And all who die in Thee, since Thou ordain’st
 That sae my soul be separated from
 This mortal body, very humbly I,
 Of Thy goodness and mercy supplicate,

In this extremity not to forsake,
But that I may be covered with Thy grace,
Giving me pardon for all negligence
And faults against Thy holy ordinance,
Even as I with a good heart forgive
All those who have offended and condemned
Me wickedly to this cruel death.

Yet hold

I it for certain that the just judgements
Of God will follow this Queen, my sister,
Sae strictly and sae close that all her life
Her conscience, and after her death, God, will
Accuse her of my innocence, in which
My spirit fearlessly I render to
His hands.

Permit me, my God, that without
Offence to Thee, and in few words I tell
All those before whom I shall render up
My soul to Thee, and all my Realm, yea all
Of Christendom the protestation that
I make ; which is that never have I willed,
Concerted or conspired or given aid
Nor counsel in any conspiracy
Of death ; though often I have sought escape,

By aid of friends, Catholics of this realm
 And elsewhere, from these prisons, by sic means,
 Without offence against Thy Majesty
 Divine, as guiltless I could sanction ; yea
 In this place I beseech Thee, that if I
 Other intent have had, my soul may be
 Deprived participation in Thy grace
 And mercy, and the fruits which she expects
 And hopes from the maist precious passion of
 Our Lord thy dearest son ; sae, innocent
 Of all sic treachery, my other faults
 Do I remit to Thy justice divine ;
 By invocation to the glorious
 Virgin, and all the saints and angels, with
 All Blessèd now in Paradise, that they
 Will now be pleased to intercede for me
 That sae I may partake and reign with them
 In the celestial glory evermore.

My poor damsels and friends, it grieveth me
 Sae little to requite you wherewithal
 Have I, according to my will, the good
 And faithful services that every one
 Of you have rendered to me in my need.

Yet one thing rests to do, to add a clause
Unto my will bidding my son the King
Of Scotland make to every one of you
Worthy contentment after I am dead.
And you, my desolated servants, give
Not up yourselves unto despair, but think
On all points of that patience which was shown
In the dear death and passion of our Lord,
For our example ; whom I rest upon
As the foundation sole of my salvation.
—And watch and pray to God continually
With me.

Now I beseech you, good my friends,
Not to forsake me, but be near to me
At my death-hour ; and have a care of this
Poor body, and if sae be that ye may,
Lay it in holy earth. Committing you
Sae to our blessèd Lord, I bid fareweel.

And now the woeful present, and the near
And bloody end bethought of, let me scan,
(As drowning folk, men say, in one brief flash
See all the past clear with their closing eyes,)

The short, sad life, or the long living death
That now a scaffold ends, and ask myself,
As one that stands in sight of the White Throne
Whereon He sits who judges quick and dead,
Was there indeed “ nae outgait,” as I wrote
To my fell sister, who now dips her hands
In my heart’s blood?

What otherwise could I,

—Being this I, and standing where I stood?
E’en with these eyes made clear by the near gleam
Of Headsman’s axe “ nae outgait ” can I see.
Many my faults of youth and ignorance,
Yet ever to correction docile, sae
It came in guise worthy a Queen free-born,
Nowise a slave.

Alack ! an evil star

’Twas rose above my cradle, and its ray,
Ill-omened and sinister, followed me,
All my life through unto this bloody end !
A six-days’ babe within Linlithgow’s halls,
The shade of Scotland’s thistle-crown fell ower
My infant sleep, dropt from despairing brows,
Where my young father turned his woeful face
To his auld Falkland palace wall and died ;

—Heart-break or foul play who shall say by which?
Beaton and Arran, round my nursery door
Wrangled for regency. England's Henry,
For the soft, helpless, dimpled baby hand,
Bade for his Prince, while true Scots fought to *save*
Their land frae the "Auld Enemy" that fain
Had swallowed her, with me, poor innocent!
—Begun in blood fitly in blood it ends.

Yet what knew I? No blood-red stain for me
Shadowed the tender green of opening spring,
Or long bright hours of sunny summer days,
When by Linlithgow's Loch, or 'neath the shade
Of Stirveling's Castle Rock, amang the trees
I played, while my good Janet Sinclair watched
My merry romps; her swift wires, (stuck in bun *c*
Of feathers at her girdle), twinkling as
She knit hose for John Kemp her husband, who
Comfits had aye in his big doublet pouch
For his "wee Queen," (as me he wont to call,)
When we (Janet and I) bare him the hose
To his low timber hut beside the Loch,
And I rode on his shoulder and his foot,
And supped on brose and bannocks of oatmeal.

Then home or dusk, and Janet brushed my hair
Into soft curls, and put on my white frock,
And tied my sash and buttoned my blue shoes,
And my fair stately mother played with me
A while in the great hall before she went
To sup, and I to bed in my white crib.
Oh! solitary happy baby days!
A lonely child with life's first dazzling dreams
For only playmates!—Happier life has none!

Then came a change; and Inchmacomb's auld walls,
Used but to cowed monks' chants, rang with the glee
Of my four Marys and their Mary Queen;
And the good fathers' garden where they grew
Herbs for their “potage maigre” blossomed out
In roses, marjoram and eglantine,
And great box-borders as we delved and sang,
Making child's gardens 'neath the auld gray walls.

A new change then. A regal progress through
The merry land of France, royal honours all
The way from Roscoff to Saint-Germain-Laye
For the French King's little “Reinette of Scotland,”
Whom weel he loved and gave a mimic court;

While she and her four Marys shared with his
Ain bairns, Frances, Henry, Charles, Margaret,
Elizabeth, and Claude, in games and tasks ;
And aye his “Reinette” must precede them all,
Whom his young Dauphin claimed to be his bride
Already as they danced, (some five years old,)
At the great wedding of the Duc d'Aumale,
—Folk said, a fairy pair.

At Joinville next,
With the dear Grandmère in her black serge gown ;
(Her coffin ever in the gallery
Through which she passed to Mass,) where the quiet
hours
Sped on swift wings above the girlish head
Bent low ower book, or tapestry, or work
Of coarser sort, for deeds of charity.
And oft my uncles came, Charles of Guise,
Brave, soldier-like, and generous ;—severe
And stern, men said,—yet never stern to me ;
And the great Cardinal, the Diplomat,
With his shrewd, quick, observant, hawk-like eye ;
Much taught they me, and praised the ready wit,
And promise of their scholar. Visits too

To my sweet aunt, Abbess of Saint Pierre,
When oft at vespers low I knelt within
The great Rheims Minster, and rejoiced to see
The westering sun through its rose-window pour
A flood of gold besprent with dazzling gems.

Yet even there already Sorrow showed
Her bodeful face. At eight years old I stood
By the good Grandpère's bier ; and the great joy
Of my dear mother's visit,—I sae sair
Had wept to leave in Scotland,—all owercast
By mutterings ominous,—scarce understood
Yet bodeful,—of mysterious mischief scarce
Escaped, meant me in cup of Robert Stewart ;
—Uncomprehended all yet haunting aye.
Then parting's bitter woe, alack the last !
For ne'er again I saw my mother's face.
—Yet still Sorrow but showed her face and passed,
Leaving the joy behind.

Weel I recall,

—Eleventh birthday past,—the New-Year's Day,
And the great supper, in mine ain new house,
I gave the Cardinal !—and how he came
Monthly thereafter, to sum up accounts,

And set the house in order, and report
To the Queen-Regent what a wise house-wife
She had for daughter ! Then the letters frae
My sweet Elizabeth, daughter of France,
Dearest and closest friend aye to my heart ;
My Odes and Poems, Brantome, Ronsard praised ;
And the great joy of mine ain Frances' love,
Crowned that sweet April morn in Notre Dame,
When he and I plighted our wedded troth,
Ere our twain ages joined made thirty years.

Ah ! thae sweet weeks at Villers-Coterets,
Hidden amid its trees, hard by Soissons,
Where I a fourteen-year-old bride, was all
The world to my dear Heart, as he to me !
And the gay days at Henry's sparkling Court,
Filled full with Love, Beauty, and Chivalry,
The Minstrel's lay, the Courtier's homage, all
Life's joys brimming the dazzling cup !—How soon
In fragments dashed from the uplifting hand !

Scarcely I heeded it amid the joy,
Yet ower the gladness fell a passing shade,
When I minded the double bond I signed,

—The French bond and the Scots,—or we were
wed ;

—For ever was I prone to openness
In word and deed,—ower prone my mother deemed ;
Aye aught hidden irked me :—yet must a Queen
Keep counsel, (sae she taught), nor wear her heart
Upon her sleeve as may the simple sort.
Sae signed I as they bade, or I was wed,
The Scottish crown, (did I die issueless),
To Henry my good-father soon to be,
And aye the only father I had known ;
And to my France, for ancient services
'Gainst England, the “Auld Enemy” ; sae baith
The Duke and Cardinal, my uncles willed,
As best for the True Faith, mine ain Realm, France,
And me ; sae mine ain heart too urged, that loved
The King, my dear Heart's father, and the Land,
My mother's and my husband's ay and mine,
Far more than mine own far-off savage realm.
And when a fortnight after they bade sign
The Scots' Lords' bargain, and say ne'er a word
O' other bond, 'twas but state-craft, they said,
Sic as a Queen maun use ;—yet still it irked,
Though swallowed in young gladness.

Honours came

Crowding fast.—The matrimonial crown
 Of Scotland with the Dauphin's badge of France
 My Frances wore upon his dear pale brow ;
 And when Mary of England died, they wove
 The English Lions in our quarterings
 Blazoned with France and Scotland, (seeing she
 Who claimed to wear them was a bastard born,
 —This same fell woman who now gluts the hate
 That day had birth, in my heart's blood.) The *arms*
 Were mine of right ;—now Mary Tudor dead,
 Next heir true-born to English Henry's crown ;
 Yet that emblazoned flag that waved sae gay
 Above our tournament, (—twice fatal sae,—)
 Of Place des Tournelles, where good Henry fell,
 Is this day's pall to wrap a headless corpse !
 Yet where the outgait ? Catholic and Queen,
 How might I quit my right to England's Throne,
 Yield it to bastard and to heretic ?
 —Gaily our flag waved then nor breathed of woe *!*
 Yet was woe nigh, for there, a random lance,
 Left fatherless, Frances, and France, and me !

Then ill news came treading on ill news' heels

Full gladly gave. Then to her ain French land
Wisely the Regent turned and succour craved;
And French and English battled it at Leith.

Sae lowering clouds brooded ower my poor realm,
And nearer, direr came the news of dule,
How in her house in Edinburgh, hard
By the Castle, with war and care out-worn,
My Regent-mother yielded her great soul
Into God's hands who gave. Twice orphaned thus,
Alane amid the din of warring creeds
Each with its foreign succour;—Scottish Lords
Throttling ilk ither ower the Bishops' spoils,
—The Congregation riving it frae baith
To feed their Preachouris.—James Sandilands
Dinning mine ears to sign the Treaty called
Of Edinburgh, for “all time coming”
The Arms of England to renounce,—the whilk
Nowise I bode to do! Heresy too
In France lifting bold front, the whilk, the Duke
My uncle punishing, an evil bruit
Went forth of Frances and of me, (hunting
The while in happy ignorance!) that he,
—The King,—to cure a loathsome leprosy,

Made baths of little children's blood ! Sae when
 At Blois we rode in royal procession, lo !
 Ilk face was turned away in horror, till
 My Frances in his pain turned on the Duke
 Upbraiding him, “ What have I done,” he said,
 “ Thus to be hated ? I am shunned. Behold
 My people look on me with horror ! Oh !
 My uncle Guise 'tis you that they abhor,
 Not me.”

Woes followed fast. De' Barri's plot,
 And Guises' fierce reprisals made Amboise
 A shambles where the streets ran blood, and e'en
 The Castle battlements, (within whilk we
 Abode,) were gibbets, and trees in its park,
 Ilk wi' its ghastly corpse ; and when distraught
 With all that horror, to Chenonceau we
 Fled, and were royally greeted there, mocking,
 Men said “ Doubtless we were weel satisfied !”

Then with the winter came worst woe of all,
 For then my dear Heart sickened, and or passed
 The auld decrepit year, my young King lay
 In his untimeous grave ; and I, or yet
 My eighteenth birthday, knew a widow's dule.

Oh ! yon lang winter's midnight when I sat
Alane with my dear Heart, and the dim light
From the long tapers flickering, ghastly fell,
In moving shadows on the moveless brow,
And the still form beneath its shroud of white ;
And my heart seemed as moveless, turned to stone,
Ower which the world with all its weal and woe,
Like those dim wavering taper-lights, might play,
And leave it cauld and careless as that form
'Neath the white winding-sheet !—Next day I gave
The Medicis the jewels I wore as Queen
Of France. What now to me?—since nevermore,
My Frances, could their gleam enhance for thee
The beauty that thou lovedst ! Henceforth for
me,

White robe of dule and life as colourless.
—But for the Queen Douaire another son
And a new King !—Why weep for Frances though
She gave him birth?—Me, aye she hated. Yet
My heart ached when my Uncles Guise as well,
Following the Medicis, left me next morn
Alane beside my dead ;—till with no pomp,
Myself and Senlis' good old bishop laid
My Frances at Saint Dennis to his rest.

For forty days no daylight entered where
 I and my grief sat lane : then requiem said
 For his poor soul in the Gray Friars' church
 At Orleans, there, and at Rheims I made,
 —Far from the Medicis' intriguing Court,—
 My sad abode.—In my white robes of dule
 At mass with Grandmère Bourbon in her black
 Serge gown, or vespers with Renée, my aunt,
 Amid the sunset's glory flood, within
 Rheims' grand old Minster's aisles, in musings sad
 Knelt till the glory faded from the west ;
 And in the twilight street folk started as
 “ The White Queen ” (as they called me) glided past,
 Like a dim ghost to weep through the still night,
 And croon, — for the Love chansons Ronsard
 praised,—
 Sonnets of widowed woe.—One haunts me now,
 Singing its sad refrain within my brain,
 Of my first love, this my last night on earth !

En mon triste et doux chant
 D'un ton fort lamentable
 Je jette un œil tranchant,
 De perte incomperable,

Et en soupirs unsans
Passe mes meilleurs ans.

Fut-il tel malheur
De dure destinée,
Ny si triste douleur,
De Dame fortunée,
Qui mon cœur et mon œil,
Vois en bierre et cercüeil.

Qui en mon doux printemps
Et fleur de ma jeunesse
Toutes les paines sens,
D'une extreme tristesse,
Et en rien n'ay plaisir,
Qu'en regret et désir.

Ce qui m'estoit plaisant,
Ores m'est peine dure,
Le jour le plus luisant,
M'est nuit noire et obscure,
Et n'est rien si exquis,
Quit de moy foit requis.

J'ay au cœur et a l'œil
 Un portrait et image
 Qui figure mon deüil
 Et mon pasle visage
 De violentes teint
 Qui et l'amoureux teint.

Pour mon mal etranger
 Je ne m'arreste en place
 Mais j'en ay beau changer,
 Si ma douleur efface,
 En labeur, en reçoï
 Toujours est prest de moy.

Je ne vois autre objet
 Pour beau qu'il se presente,
 A qui que soit sujet,
 Aucques mon cœur consente,
 Exempt de perfection
 A cette affliction.

Mets Chanson icy fecé
 A si triste complainte

Dont sera le refrené
Amour vraye et non fainte
Pour la seperation
N'aura diminution.

Sae passed the quiet days with the placid nuns
At Saint Pierre-les-Dames 'neath gentle sway
Of my sweet Abbess Aunt, and in their peace,
My bruised and broken heart grew soothed and calm,
Lending a passive ear to the intrigues,
Whose rumours from the distant Court scarce stirred
A heart-beat, mid those woodland solitudes.
Don Carlos' love,—Catherine the Florentine
Tradeswoman's hate,—what was it all to me,
Whose heart lay at Saint Dennis buried deep
In Frances' grave?

But not for lang that dear
And sweet repose. Baith Scottish Catholics,
And (on the Congregation's part,) Lord James
My brother, craved return to mine ain Realm,
Where ilk man's hand was against every man,
And every man's hand lifted against ilk.
Fain had I stayed, simple Douaire of France,
Rather than strive, with my tired aimless heart,

Go rule my rugged realm on Scotland's throne,
But for the Medicis' fell hate that spared
Nought that might humble ; sae, although England
Denied safe conduct, bode was I to go.
Darkness and dule and danger all the way !

Vainly I searched the gloom with longing eyes
E'en for an English fleet to force me back
To the dear Land that held my dearest Heart,
When from my bed upon our galley's deck
The Pilot called me at first streak of day
To gaze my last, as faded its faint shore
In the dim distance and my prophet heart
Foreboding said, “ It is forever,” as,
With arms outstretched towards her, sad I cried,
“ Adieu, oh France, ne'er shall I see thee more !”

And sae came I to mine ain Realm. A Land
 In throes of revolution, where the auld
 Faith of our fathers lay trampled beneath
 The feet of “ The Religion ” as they called
 The new,—which heretics from Germany
 Had brought to trouble my poor Realm.

John Knox

Blawing his blasts 'gainst "monstrous regiment
Of women,"—Lords of the Congregation,
In Parliament decreeing Holy Mass
Idolatry punished by death, Preachers
In Saint Giles' Kirk raving against ilk thing
At Court, e'en to "tarjetting of our tails,"
And jealous nobles ilk 'gainst all the rest !
What outgait there for me, a Catholic
And Queen ?

Yet my poor best I strove. Chose Lords
Of Congregation for my ministers,
Full liberty of worship left to all,
Sae mine they hindered not. Craved them to play
Their barbarous music ower again, wherewith
They greeted my first night, and when a babe,
(Issued frae mimic cloud ower Netherbow,)
Their City Keys, Bible and Psalter laid
Thegither at my feet, I took and smiled !

E'en stern John Knox himself I strove to win,
Craving his counsel for my private ear,
If aught I did misliked him. At hawking
Be-west Kinross, showed him Lord Ruthven's ring ;
Warned him 'gainst Athens' Bishop ; craved his help

In quarrel 'twixt my sister and Argyle.
 Ay, and he wrought at my commandment in
 That matter of Argyle ! found my words wise
 Anent the Bishop ! yea all but was won !

Yet all in vain ! the war was unto death !
 What amity might hold 'twixt him and me ?
 The New's Apostle, he, and I a Queen
 Leal to the auld true Faith, wherein had died
 My Frances and my mother ; and lived all
 Living I loved ! How thole its holy Mass
 An Idol held worthy of death, its priests
 Insulted at the altar, its churches
 Desecrate, its monastries in ruins ?
 How turn I my back in its adversity ?
 I thank my God, now with this bloody death,
 (Sae mayhap I had 'scaped,) a few hours hence
 To suffer, never I did ; but ever said
 True Catholic as I was born, sae would
 I live and die !

And troubles thickened fast ;
 —Poor Chastelar's infatuation wild,
 (Anger drowned pity then, I pity now !)
 And the Sanct Andros' block whereon he dreed

Its weird.—Enterprizes of England's Queen
 Anent my marrying ;—Don Carlos,—then
 The Archduke Charles,—my Lord of Dudley ;—~~w~~hilk
 Aye with a show of help she hindered, till
 Patience owerpast “ the lang lad ” as she called
 My Lord of Darnley,—heir, next after me
 To Scotland's baith and England's crown,—in ha~~nd~~^{ste}
 I wed ; (the Throne sae weel assured), his boy's
 Face and slim grace, liking me as he rode
 Beneath my chamber's window at the Weems !

Never my white dule-robcs I doffed until
 The bridal morn, and then, alack ! for dule
 Far waur in Darnley's prideful insolence,
 And childish jealous rage that made him dupe
 Of our worst foes. The woeful outrage then
 Of David's death, when ghastly Ruthven risen
 Like an ill ghost frae's sick-bed, with Lindsay
 And mony mair, stole up the secret stair
 Frae the King's rooms to mine ain Cabinet
 Wherein we sat at supper ;—Darnley held
 My waist, (poor David clinging to my skirts,)
 My sister of Argyle, the falling lights
 Kepping¹ frae the up-turning table, while

¹ Catching.

They dragged him shrieking, and outside the door
 With four-and-fifty wounds they struck him through.
 The King's red whinger left in the poor corpse !
 —I, all but ripe for motherhood !—Yet I,
 (Unwise relenting,) when with coward tears,
 The King turned on the rest, feigned penitence,
 And pled his youth and evil counsellors,
 Took him with me by night unto Dunbar !

Pardoned and rescued sae, yet plotting still !
 —Save that I bode not share or bed or board,
 —How have him back in wifely kindness wha
 Sae little recked o' my life or his ain
 Poor bairn's within my womb? — Aye when he
 sought

My favours there would rise afore my een
 That whinger red sticking in David's corpse !
 Pouting and sulking syne like a spoilt bairn ;
 At Stirveling absent frae the Christening ;
 That all men deemed the King intolerable !
 Yet when the Secretaire and others urged
 Divorce, nowise I gave consent, but pled
 That he was young, he might amend ; nocht not
 With my pure honour weel consisting might be
 Emprized.—Then when at Glasgow he fell sick,

Myself I went for him and brought him hame
To Kirk-o'-Field,—seeing men count the air
Wholesome and caller there ;—(the babe being
At Holyrood and the King's sickness o'
The catching sort.)—Oft sat I by his bed,
And my heart melting to his weakness, we
Vowed new beginnings, hoping better days.

Then came the woeful end. Scarce three hours I
Had left him wi' gift o' a ring, and kiss,
And lighter heart than e'er since David's death ;
(Going with links up the Black Friar's Wynd
To Holyrood, to see Sebastian's bride
Bedded, as wont is,) when, in the small hours
As wi' a sudden earthquake, shook the town,
And Kirk-o'-Field was blawn into the air !
Search made Henry was found, his body nor
Broken nor bruised, (aside him his young page,)
Naked within the yaird, with but his sark
Upon him !

Verily, scarce I might love
The King ! yet very pitiful it was
To see him lie dead there at Holyrood,
Ere in its abbaye he was laid near by

Poor David's corpse ;—himself untimeous slain
As he untimely slew !

I could not mourn
For Darnley as for Frances, nor abide
Holyrood's darkened rooms, filled full with ghaists,
Red-handed or red-reeking in their gore !
—Sae went to Seton or my wits should tyne
'Mang all that gloom and horror.

—Nocht kent I

Of that foul murder, nor might much surmise,
Seeing the King sae hated ; scarce a hand
Amang them all but it might stain my ain
In clasping it, with Henry's blood !—Murray
And Morton, Bothwell, and the Secretaire,
The same bruit went of all ! and weel I kent
Ilk ane misliked the King. That murderous night
Bothwell was with me at Sebastian's feast,
And lang or it was day, Bothwell it was
Brought me the woeful tidings ! How between,
Credit him with that slaughter ?—Aye my Knight
Gallant and faithful he, friend of my friends,
And foe but to my foes ; and when the bruit
Went out against him, wha but he and his
Craved inquisition o' the murder frae

Argyle? At the assize Lennox compeered
Not, (who accused,) and of five erles, five lords,
Five Barons was he cleansed. Yet not content
Challenged to single combat ony man,
Gentle and undefamed, wha dared to dub
Him murderer o' the King.—Wherefore should I
Hold him for guilty whom the law absolved,
He, aye my faithful servitor?—

Yet was

I warned of ill devise of marriage he
Dared to propone; my Lord o' Herries maist
Humbly upon his knees, prayed me to think
Upon mine honour and the surety o'
The Prince, my son; a writing Melville brought,
Likewise frae Thomas Bishop, (a true Scot
Lang time in England,) showing siclike bruit:
But how believe? Bothwell but six months wed
On Huntly's sister, I but scarce a widow?
Yet proved the bruit ower true. For coming back
Frae Stirveling, 'twixt Lithgo' and Edinburgh,
The Erle Bothwell with great company
Was in my gait at Almond Bridge, and laid
Hand on my bridle, with dark hints of ill
Upon my road, turning my palfrey's head,

And led me, Huntly and the Secretaire,
 'Mazed with him to Dunbar,—the stronghold I
 For his good service late myself had gien !

There warst befell.—Humbled, befouled, heart-broke,
 The brute-beast in my captor broken loose ;
 The Secretaire, (but that I stood between),
 Nigh slain before my een.—Their lives to save
 I feigned content, and bade my friends depart.
 To me, his heart-broke captive, Bothwell then
 Showed writ, subscrivèd of the Lords,—Huntly,
 —Argyle,—seven Bishops all willing me wed
 My ravisher and jailor ! (his new bride
 Or then he having gart sue for divorce !)
 What outgait, nane to help ? A heart-broke Bride,
 Dishonoured—tear-stained,—not with holy Mass,
 But Adam Bothwell's preaching, (since John Craig,
 Mair honest would not,) in sad wedlock I,
 In Holyrood's great Hall was joined with fell
 Earl Bothwell.

Nightmare yet these lang June days,
 Scarce darkening 'twixt gloaming of eve and morn,
 When Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Craggs looked down
 On heart-broke captive, men called Scotland's Queen,

In Holyrood, wild with a mother's fears
For her poor babe, his keeping sought by hands,
A great dread in her heart ower sure surmised
Red with ower sib a gore ! Herself sae sair
Disdainful handled that she cried aloud,
(As Arthur Erskine and James Melville heard,)
For knife to stick herself ! At last a bruit
Arising that the Lords were minded take
Holyrood House and Bothwell in the same,
He left suiting the prince, (careful to save
Himself,) and fled ;—as surety, bearing me
With him to Borthwick and Dunbar. There he
Convened the men of Merse and Lothian,
(As though in my behoof,) to fight the Lords ;
—I wha ilk day shed oceans o' salt tears
Sae beastly was he and suspicious !—Yea
When the Laird o' Grange, on my safe conduct,
Came to have speech of me at Carberry,
He set soldier to shoot him ; till I gave a cry
That nowise he might do me siclike shame !
And when he heard the Laird of Grange declare,
Gin I wad leave him wha was murderer
O' my ain husband, nor could be himself
Rightly my husband, (seeing he was wed,)

All Scotland yet would serve and honour me ;
 He offered single combat to wha would
 Maintain that he had done it ; yet when Grange,
 And Tullibardine and Lord Lindsay all
 Stood blythe and ready, held them in contempt.
 —Then once again I sent for Grange, and on
 The hill of Carberry I said to him,
 “Gin that the Lords will do as ye have said,
 My Laird of Grange I render me to you.”
 And so gave him my hand, whilk then he kissed,
 And led me by the bridle down the brae
 Unto the Lords, wha all with reverence
 Came forth to meet me ; yet some rascals cried
 Despitefully, till Grange drew out his sword
 And struck at sic as spake irreverently.
 —Then Bothwell turned his horse’s head and fled.

That night within the Provost’s Lodging, called
 The Black Turnpike, I lay in Edinburgh ;
 Oh hours of woe and dule ! All night beneath
 My windows, in the street, and on the stairs,
 The rascal multitude howled ribaldry
 And wrong !—calling me whore and murderess !
 Deploying in my sight at streak o’ day

An ensign painted with the King thereon,
 Beneath a green tree, dead, and our young son,
 Beside his head, sitting upon his knees,
 Holding his baby hands up to high Heaven
 Crying, "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!"
 Till with the horror nigh my wits were tint!

Then, for that I,—my heart relenting,—(as,
 Alack! too much its wont ever hath been!)
 —Remembering his auld service,—some few words
 Of parting kindness wrote to the fell Erle,
 —Whose face ne'er I should look on more;—
 whilk

The loon that bare, against his promise gave
 Unto the Lords,—they turned their backs on me,
 Saying I would not leave him as I said;
 And they, for surety o' their lives and lands,
 And safety o' the prince, bode sequestrate
 Me frae society o' the said Erle,
 (Whilk nowise I desired had they kent!)
 And haud me prisoner in Loch Leven's Keep.

Grange then, (sae hoping to make me and them
 Baith quit o' the fell Erle,) made ready ships

To sail to Shetland after him,—where he
 Was fled ;—and when they sighted him, (despite
 The Skipper’s counsel, ’ware o’ shallows there,)
 Grange bode have all sails hoisted, sae by ower
 Great haste their ship brake on a bed of sand,
 Whilk Bothwell seeing saved him in a boat,
 Fleeing to Denmark, where in prison strait
 He tint his wits and miserably died.
 —Confessing first the murder o’ the King,
 And purging me frae art or part therein :
 —As Morton likewise, or he died, confessed
 Though Bothwell promised him in my hand write
 To bring warrant for the King’s death, never
 Sic writ he brought,—nor could, seeing nane was.

To me then prisoned in Loch Leven came
 The rebel Lords, willing that I demit
 The Kingdom to my son,—a two-year babe,—
 That they themselves might rule, whereunto I
 Refusèd utterly, until that Grange,
 The Secretaire, Athol, and Mar, (fearing
 My life amang their bloody hands,) bespake
 Melville to show me how that aught I did,
 —Being compelled in prison,—ne’er could haud

Against me in the law ; sae at my Lord
O' Lindsay's coming,—under fear of death,—
I signed demission.

Then the Lords bode crown
The Prince, and Murray maun be Regent,—just
Retoured frae France,—wha to my prison came
Speaking sic bitter and injurious words
As cut the thread of love and credit 'twixt
Us twain forevermore.—Yet were there
Mony faithful,—Argyle, Huntly, Flemyng,
My Lord of Herries, Ross and Galloway,
Sanct Andros' Bishop, and a mony mair
Calling themselves the Queen's Lords, banded th
Together at Dumbarton 'gainst the King's,
(Seeing they called the rebels by the name
Of that poor Innocent).—Ay, e'en within
The Castle in the Loch, gude friends I found,
George Douglas — though the Regent's mot
son,—

Ay, the auld dame herself, keepit quiet sough
When little Willie Douglas stole the keys
Frae by the Laird's ain plate at supper time,
And rowed a gentlewoman o' the Queen's,
(Wha but the Queen herself?) ower to Kinros

(Casting the keys intil a cannon's mouth,
Where George, Lord Seton and the Hammiltons
Waited me and convoyed to Hammilton.

Gif they had waited as I willed, the Laird
O' Grange and Leddington's communing wi'
Lord Herries and the rest !—Alack not sae
God willed. Ower fierce they pressed to battle.—When
Langside was lost, first I tint courage,—whilk
Never I did afore !—That dolesome night
At the Black Turnpike, when I rendered me
Up to the Lords,—the flag with Henry dead
Beneath a growing tree and our young babe
Crying for vengeance,—the mob's shouts upon
The stairs ; all wrought sae great a fear o' mine
Ain countrymen, that fairer showed even
My sister England's promises ; and ne'er
After the battle I drew rein until
Sixty miles off, Dundrennan's Abbey reached,
And with Lord Herries rowed the Solway ower,
At Workington, I put my life within
The hungry jaws o' the “Auld Enemy” !
—A foolish bird fluttering for refuge 'neath
Wing o' the hovering hawk !

There life had end ;
The rest but death in life.—Why tell the tale ?
Prisons and jailors,—Carlisle and Bowton,
Knollys and my Lord Scrope ;—Elizabeth's
Commissioners at York feigning fair play,
Sifting with dearest of my foes, letters
Of mine to Bothwell,—as they boast, Dalglish
Within a silver casket found,—whereof
Nane were to Bothwell, maist of Morton forged.
—Fause Moray vowing ne'er he would consent,
Consenting to that shame ; nae word of mine
Allowed !

Erle Shrewsbury and his jealous dame ;
Tutbury and Sheffield, Wingfield, Chatsworth,
Hardwick and Buxton, Tixal and Chartley ;
Sir Amias Paulet the sour Puritan,
And last this Fotheringay where all has end.
England's fell Queen's feigned friendship,—the waur
dule
Of mine own flesh and blood's forgetfulness,
(If so be that the poor boy were not wronged,
His letters hindered, he as helpless as
His mother,—as now by the near clear gleam
Of Headsman's axe I seem to see ;)—all friends

That stood for me,—the auld Northumberland,
 Mine ain true lord of Norfolk, whose dear love
 Shone my sole glint o' God's light in the dark ;—
 Paying the forfeit on the bloody block.
 —Why tell the woeful tale,—a dream now past ;
 A nightmare of the dark, to-morrow's axe
 Shall cleave a bloody way through to the Light
 And to God there.—

Sae to man's earth, Fareweel.



RIFT IV.

“FOR CHRIST’S CROWN
AND COVENANT.”

A.D. 1582–1688.



ACT I.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JAMES VI. of Scotland.

Mister ANDREW MELVILLE, Moderator of the General
Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland.

Mister JAMES MELVILLE, his Nephew.

Sir JAMES MELVILLE of Hahill.

JAMES STEWART, Earl of Arran.

Mister PATRICK GALLOWAY, } Commissioners from the
Mister JAMES NICOLSONE, } General Assembly.

Two Ministers of the Kirk of Scotland.

Provost and Baillies of Edinburgh.

&c.

“FOR CHRIST’S CROWN AND
COVENANT.”

RIFTS IN THE REEK OF A CENTURY’S DRAMA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*A throng of Ministers and Elders about the door of
the New Kirk, after an extraordinary diet of the
General Assembly, Edinburgh, June 27, 1582.*

FIRST MINISTER.

WHAT think ye of our Moderator’s charge?
’Twas a bold figure, “The bloody gullie”
Of the King his Grace’s authority
In matters spiritual !

SECOND MINISTER.

Verily,
A bold figure, yet a true ! What is it but

To pull the Crown off Christ his head, and wring
The Sceptre from His hand, ay and to lay
A “Bloody gullie,” as saith Mister Andrew,
Unto the throat of His dear Spouse the Kirk,
When the Duke’s Tulchan, Robert Montgomery,
Of our Assembly excommunicate
In Kirk of Libberton this tenth of June,
Through mouth of good Mister Johne Davidsone,
And intimation thereof made Wednesday
Thereafter from Edinburgh pulpits,—
An order yet is made of the King’s Grace,
The Lord’s Day following, in most the Kirks
Of Glasgow and the South, to pull from out
The pulpit who should make sic intimation?

FIRST MINISTER.

Whilk notwithstanding Mister Johne, nothing
Affrighted, taught in Libberton that day!
For the whilk, men say Lennox hath called him
“Un petit Diable.”

SECOND MINISTER.

Ay, the Duke’s Grace
Likes not his Tulchan mishandled, lest his

Fat Cow, the Glasgow Bishopric, hold up
Her milk ! Ill day was it for Scotland that
Brought Esmé Stewart’s red beard across the water,
(Sent of the Guises,) with his merry mate
Mombirneau, and his forty thousand crowns,
Pistoles and golden angels, to cause dance,
Our King’s Grace (being then but a young child
Of twelve years,) to their Popish tunes !

FIRST MINISTER.

Heard ye ever tale of the Englishman
Who queried of a Scot anent the King’s
Grace dispositions ? Quoth the Scot, “ Saw ye
Ever a Jackanapes ? Gif ye have ye
Will know that gif ye hold him in *your* hands
Ye can make him bite *me*, and gif I hold
Him in *my* hands I can make him bite *you*.”
And so of the King’s Grace !

SECOND MINISTER.

’Tis pity of him,
Had he abode by tutoring of our
Good Mister George Buchanan it had been
Otherwise for the profit of baith Kirk

And Country ! Wist ye what saith James Melville?
How when he saw the King's Grace, (having then
Eight years,) in the auld Lady Mar's hand, walk
Discoursing of Knowledge and Ignorance,
At Stirveling, the sweetest sight he thought it,
For gifts extraordinaire and strange, that day
In Europe ?

FIRST MINISTER.

The Guises' devilish device
Spoiled all,—not their first spoilzie in this poor
 realm !—
Their Messieurs d'Obignie and Mombirneau,
With their French toys and fashions did bewitch
Our Prince's youth ; our Reformation of Religion
And all our service done for him before,
Causing to seem but in his eyes
As dealings turbulent and treasonable,
Subverting of his kingly power.

SECOND MINISTER.

The French
Esmé Stewart, and the Scottish James Stewart,—
 Lennox

And Arran,—hunt in couples, and an ill
Hunting ’tis like to be for Scotland !

[*Enter* PROVOST *and* BAILLIES.

FIRST BAILLIE.

Saw ye ever sic passion of anger
In man’s face as in good Mister Davidsons’s
Anent the matter of John Durie ?

FIRST MINISTER.

Nay, we were called forth the Assembly or
Mister Andrew ceased his exhortation,
And nought heard of Johne Durie’s matter save
That secretly he was charged in his house
Of David Bryson, macer, to pass off
The town, and abstain preaching in respect
A fault he had confessed before the Council.

SECOND BAILLIE.

Thereby ye missed a notable sederunt !
Scarce Mister Andrew ended, Johne Durie
Of the Assembly craved advice, with large
Discourse of the proceedings of the King

And Council against him, (with James Lawson,
Walter Balcalquel, and David Lindsay,)
Affirming the submission they alledge
Is false, (his affirmation justified
Of the said Mister James and Mister David,)
And telling how said Mister James and he,
Being summoned on thirtieth day of May
To compear at Dalkeith to answer of
His sermon wherein he, (speaking but truth),
Named Arran and the Duke, abusers of
The King, narrowly with his life he 'scaped,
The Duke his Grace's cooks out of their kitchen
With spits and great knives after him ! The matter
Remit, and Mister Andrew deeming meet
To send unto the King to understand
His mind thereon, made choice for messengers
Of Misters Buchanan and Fergusone ;
Or they had steckt the door behind them, rose
Johne Davidstone, in a great low of wrath,
“ I disassent,” quoth he, “ that they should go,
For wherefore should ye seek reposing of
Johne Durie from whom hath of displacing him
No power ? (Howbeit that his flock most foolish—
Yea godlessly did yield,) for what flesh may

place the Ambassador of the Great King
hile he doth keep the bounds of his commission ?”
wroth was he, the Moderator bade
im moderate his zeal.

SECOND MINISTER.

Ay, did he so ?
t in his heart I wis he did applaud !
that quarrel our Mister Andrew's zeal
as a fire white-hot ; deep down it burns,
t by and bye 'twill set all in a low !¹

FIRST MINISTER.

and what fell next, good Master Baillie ?

FIRST BAILLIE.

Then

me in my Lord the Provost with all us,
aillies and Council of the town, craving
vice of the Assembly touching this
ur due obedience to the King his charge,
o cause Johne Durie to pass off the town ;
hereto the Moderator queried, “ Did

¹ Flame.

We crave advice as touching conscience, aye
Or no?" answered, "Fully we were resolved
Of conscience," then said he, "So far as it
Is civil, the Assembly meddles not;"
And so the heat increased betwixt us that
The Moderator did himself much need
His own admonishment!—At the last 'twas
Of the most part concluded that Johne Durie
Should quietly depart; gif he refused
Then as the King commanded should he be
Charged. But brethren deeming it not meet
He should withdraw privately off the town,
But abide rather the King's charge, therefore
(Though with much heaviness of heart,) gave we
The same; whilk he, resolving to obey,
On Thursday after supper, at nine hours,
With many brethren to the Market Cross
Did go, and there take instruments, touching
His honest conversation, and sound faith,
Likewise of falseness of the narrative
Of his alledged submission, and that still
Where'er he had occasion he would preach
The Word, as our Assembly liberty
Hath given, the King his letter notwithstanding;—

(The whilk discharged him as well to preach
As to abide within the town.) Whereon
Protesting said Mister Johne Davidsons,
’Twas sight most sorrowful for Edinburgh
Ever he saw, in that to pleasure flesh
And blood they had removed their Pastor, who
Spake truth ; so should plague and God’s fearful
judgements
Alight on the devisers, inventors,
Procurers, actors, authors, consentors,
And rejoicers at Christ His banishment
In that man’s person ;—except speedily
They do repent.—Whereat the folk standing
There throng about them greatly were commoved.
—So went Johne Durie forth the Netherbow.

SCENE II.

Ante-room in King James VI.'s Palace at Perth.

SIR JAMES MELVILLE *of Hahill and* MR JAMES ~~MELVILLE~~ §
MELVILLE.

SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Good Mister James, gif ye do tender weel
Your Uncle's life give him this counsel as
From a true-hearted weel-wisher and cousin,
—Likewise in your ain person follow it,—
That ye depart speedily off this town ;
Seeing how evil your report at Court
Anent these sermons umquhile at the Fast
At Sanct Andros, and other your sayings
And doings at Assemblies late bygane.

MR JAMES MELVILLE.

In good sooth, worthy Cousin, 'twas even
These same ill reports athort the country,
That at this Perth Convention all our brethren
Did stand in hazard of their lives, that moved
Me to repair here with all diligence,

To take part with my Uncle, and (in Christ,)
My father.

SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Here comes good Mister Andrew,
Deal thou with him and that right earnestly,
Seeing ’tis politic I be not seen
To speak with him, and that my hint remain
As ’twere *sub rosâ*.

[*Enter* MR ANDREW MELVILLE.

Good morrow, Cousin,
And God be wi’ ye! Your worthy nephew,
Mister James here, hath come hot haste with words
Of moment for your private ear; prithee
Give heed thereto.

[*Exit* SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

MR ANDREW MELVILLE.

God speed you, nephew! Right
Joyful am I at heart to see your face,
Yet of your unlooked coming gladly I
Would know the occasions.

MR JAMES MELVILLE.

Most dear my Uncle,
Urgent the occasions and yet most secret ;
—Let us withdraw to yon embrasured window
And there unheard confer.

[*They withdraw into a deep window.*

The cause that gart
Me quit in haste Sanct Andros and hath now
Ower sure confirming, Uncle, in the words
Of our good cousin Hahill, is report
Athort the country spread, of ill intent
Towards our Kirk's Commissioners now called
To meet the King's Grace in Convention here ;
—Towards thee and me in special, (as but now
Advised me our good cousin,) on the part
Of the Court faction ; yea most earnestly
He dealt with me, as I would tender weel
Your life and mine, that off the town instantly
We do depart, or worse come of it ; ill
Against us both being determined of
Lennox and Arran ; wherefore let us go.

MR ANDREW MELVILLE.

Nay verily, good nephew ! Depart thou
And with all speed, seeing thou hast no call
Of God here ; much am I, too, beholden
To our good cousin Hahill for his hint
Right friendly given,—as it doth weel behove
Ane sib of kith and kin ;—Yet do I thank
My God, nocht fleyed nor feeble-spirited
Am I, in Christ His Cause and Message. Come
What God please to send ; to the King’s Grace
Maun our commission be discharged.

MR JAMES MELVILLE.

Gif so

Your resolution steadfast be, likewise
Will I abide.

MR ANDREW MELVILLE.

Here be the messengers
To bid us to the King.

[*They enter the Council-chamber where JAMES VI., ARRAN, LENNOX, and the rest of the Court are already seated. Preliminaries*

*over, MR ANDREW MELVILLE rises with
a paper from which he reads.*

“Your Majesty, as spokesman of our Kirk,
I am commissioned to declare this day
Before the King’s Grace, these our Kirk’s sore griefs ;
First, that your Majesty, by the device
Of Counsellors, is caused upon your Grace
To take that spiritual authority
And power which appertain of right to Christ
Alone, as His Kirk’s only King and Head ;
(Whereof the ministry and execution
He gives only to sic as office bear
In government ecclesiastical
Of the said Kirk ;) so in your Grace’s person
Some do press new Popedom to erect
As though your Majesty could not be Head
And King of this our Commonwealth unless
Swords spiritual and temporal baith
Be put into your Grace’s hands, and Christ
Bereft of His authority ; the quhilk
Confounds the jurisdiction God divides,
And tends directly to the wrack of all
Religion ; as by these especial heads

Is manifest ; that by power absolute
Are benefices given to the unworthy,
Intruset in the ministry without
The Kirk’s admission, against baith the laws
Of God and Acts of Parliament ; wherethrough
The livings of the Kirk do come into
The hands of men profane, siclike as sell
Their souls and make shipwreck of Conscience, for
Men’s pleasure or worldly commodity.”

JAMES STEWART, EARL OF ARRAN (*interrupting*).

What ! wha dare subscribe thir treasonable
Articles ?

MR ANDREW MELVILLE (*taking a pen from
the Clerk*).

We dare, and will subscribe them ;
And will give our lives upon this Cause.

[*He signs, and all the Commissioners of the
Kirk add their names after his.*

SCENE III.

Falkland Palace, October 1593.

JAMES VI., MR ANDREW MELVILLE, MR JAMES
MELVILLE, PATRICK GALLOWAY, JAMES NICOLSONE,
Commissioners from the General Assembly.

MR PATRICK GALLOWAY.

What were the best ordering of our discourse
With the King's Grace?

MR JAMES NICOLSONE.

Albeit Mister Andrew Melville be
Our Moderator, and in ordinar
Our spokesman, yet, seeing that Mr James
Is likewise able to propone our matter
Substantiously and weel; and in a manner mild
And smooth quhilk the King liketh best of, good—
Were it, to my thinking, gif the said
Mister James, (willing its weight to underlie,)
Proposed the matter firstly to his Grace
Himself alone. Our Mister Andrew hath,

ving his presence,) more in him of Lion
an of Lamb in sic like controversy!

MR ANDREW MELVILLE.

James, 'tis laid on thee to be spokesman,
ou knowest the King's Grace would none of me,
do I thank my God though I brake in
called on his Convention of Estates,
to his sore displeasure,) yet or I
his command departed, I discharged
him and them my conscience and commission,
God's name and the Kirk's. Yet is mild speech
r to win him, and an ill way hath,
es, my tongue of catching fire, when burns
heart within; wherefore good nephew, thou
er alane in the King's Cabinet.
der his Grace's Messenger at Arms;
ward nephew, and God send thee good speed!

[MR JAMES MELVILLE *enters*
the King's Cabinet.

JAMES VI.

nd Mister James, we greet you heartily
I weel; what is your will of the King's Grace?

Glad are we at the heart 'tis Mister James
This day, for sooth good Mister Andrew's speech
Is wont of digestion to be but hard
For a King's stomach !

MR JAMES MELVILLE.

Your Majesty, I have been sent to show
Unto the King's Grace that your Majesty's
Most loyal and loving subjects, Commissioners,
Of our Kirk's General Assembly, with
Other brethren ordained to watch its weal
In this so dangerous a time, convened
At Cowper—

JAMES VI. (*angrily*).

And wherefore convenet they
At Cowper? Ken ye not all sic convenings
And Assemblyings without the King's warrant
Be simple sedition, clean against all
Laws of right Monarchy, and of effect
To make baith ourselves and the Country fear,
Where is no cause for fear?

MR JAMES MELVILLE.

Your Majesty,

May it please the King’s Grace—

MR ANDREW MELVILLE (*bursting into the Cabinet*).

Your Majesty—

JAMES VI.

What the Deil Mister Andrew brings *you* here
But¹ warrant or occasion?

MR ANDREW MELVILLE.

Even the same your Majesty that brought
Me here aforetime. A calling I have
Hither to come of Christ Jesus the King;
And that your Majesty’s voice, waxing loud,
We, waiting without, heard your Grace’s railing
Against the brethren convened at Cowper.

JAMES VI.

Get ye hame, Mister Andrew, and intruse
Not yourself without warrant on the King,
Lest worse thing come to you.

¹ Without.

MR ANDREW MELVILLE (*seizing the King's sleeve*).

Sir, I am come
With a commission from the Mighty God
Of whom your Grace is but the silly vassal.
Sir, always in public will we reverence
Your Majesty, but since God gives us this
Private occasion, and the truth is, ye
Are brought in extreme danger baith of life
And crown ; and withal baith the Kirk of Christ
And Country like to wrack for the not telling
Of you the truth, and the not giving of you
A faithful counsel, therein maun we discharge
Our duty or be traitors baith to Christ
And you. And therefore, Sir, as diverse times
Afore, so now again mon I tell you
There is in Scotland twa Kings and twa Kingdoms,
The King Christ Jesus and the Kirk His kingdom,
Whose subject is King James the Sixth ; yea, in
That Kingdom, not a King, nor Lord, nor Head,
But member ; and, Sir, when yet ye were in
Your swaddling-clouts, Christ Jesus freely reigned,
(Spite all His enemies,) within this land,
His officers and ministers convening

And assembling for His Kirk’s rule and weal,
—Quhilk ever was also for your weal, fear,
Defence and preservation ; will ye now,
—When is mair nor extreme necessity
Of the continuance and true discharge
Of that duty,—drawn by a devilish
And maist pernicious council to your ain
Destruction,—hinder, depart, dishearten
Christ’s servants, your ain best and maist faithful
Subjects ; quarrelling them for their convening
And care that they have of their duty baith
To Christ and you ? when rather ye should commend
And countenance them, as aye godly Kings
And good Emperors did. Anent the wisdom
Of your Council (quhilk I call devilish,)
This it is, that of all sort of men ye
Mon be servet ;—Gentile and Jew, Papist
And Protestant ;—and for that ministers
And Protestants in Scotland be ower stark,
And do control the King, they mon be weakened
And brought low and the King being equal
And indifferent, so shall baith be fain
To flee to him, and he weel servet.—But,
Sir, gif God’s wisdom be the only true,



ACT II.

SCENE I.

St Giles' Kirk, Edinburgh, Sunday, July 23, 1637.

A great concourse of people filling the Kirk, and overflowing into the street. A group of serving-maids and kail-wives in a corner.

FIRST SERVING-MAID.

WERT here at good Mister Henderson's prayers at eight o' the clock?

SECOND SERVING-MAID.

Ay that was I, and a right sad ending they had! Quoth the good man, the tears on his bonny cheeks, "Adieu good folk," quoth he, "for indeed I think this be the last time of my reading of prayers in this

place :” and so with a sorrowful step came he down from the reading place and went his way.

FIRST SERVING-MAID.

Think ye, kimmer, good Mister Henderson will have nane of the Archbishop's Liturgy?

SECOND SERVING-MAID.

That will he never! “An ill-mumbled mass” as the auld King himsel', honest man, (howsoever he favoured but ower muckle the Bishops,) was fain to confess it; and this Laud's Buik waur than a', my master says, being little other than the Popish Breviary in the Scots tongue.

JENNY GEDDES (*a Kail-wife*).

And sooth is it sae that the King's Grace hath sent an order frae London for ilk minister in Scotland to use the same or be put to the horn?

SECOND SERVING-MAID.

Ay, kimmer, that's the word, and thereupon good Mister Henderson hath demitted his office. The Dean will be here anon doubtless,—in the night-sark

they ca’ their Surplices,—to din the Archbishop’s Papistry in our lugs.

JENNY GEDDES (*muttering to herself*).

Mair nor good Mister Henderson may hae to say this day is the last o’ their reading o’ prayers in this place, or a’s done!

FIRST SERVING-MAID.

Saw ye ever my Lord the Archbishop?

SECOND SERVING-MAID.

Ay, weel mind I o’ the ill-faured face o’ him at the King’s Grace’s crowning, twa years sin syne; a wee black-a-vised man, wi’ the e’e o’ a Corbie! Oh, woman, that was a grand sicht! The auld Cross ran wi’ wine, and a muckle mound they ca’d Mount Parnassus, a’ green wi’ birks, stood where they’re bigging the Tron Kirk the day, and nine buxom lasses—the muses they ca’d them—waiting there to welcome the King’s Grace; an’ the auld Castle booming wi’ a’ its cannon, and the music and the bells, and a’ the streets railed and sanded, and arches o’ a’ the flowers o’ June

owerhead! But weel I mind my master shook his head, when at the crowning the wee ill-faured Laud thrust aside ane o' the Scottish Bishops, honest man, for wearing of his black gown; and syne the Lord's day thereafter, when the King's Grace went to sermon in the High Kirk here, cam ane o' the Bishops frae the King's Loft, and pu'ed the Reader doun when he was about beginning the Psalms o' David, and set up in his place twa English choristers in their night-sarks o' Surplices. And thereafter was there sic fiddling and dancing on the Lord's Day as ne'er was heard the like; and aye my Master said it wad come to nae good ending.

FIRST SERVING-MAID.

Alack! little ending there seems to it, ^{now} ministers maun teach their folk the Archbishop's Papistry out of his new Buik, or be put to ~~the~~ horn and demit of their charges!

JENNY GEDDES.

"It's a lang lane has nae turning," there ~~may~~ be an end or weel they wot!

FIRST SERVING-MAID.

See! yonder's the Dean in his white sark!

[Enter DEAN JAMES HANNA in his surplice from the vestry.—All the people gaze at him in deep silence; he enters the Reader's desk, and opening his book begins to read the Collect for the day.]

JENNY GEDDES.

Deil collick the wame o' thee, thou false thief!
Dost thou say the Mass at my lug?

[Lifting up the folding stool on which she had been sitting, she hurls it at the Dean, who "jouking" his head escapes the blow.]

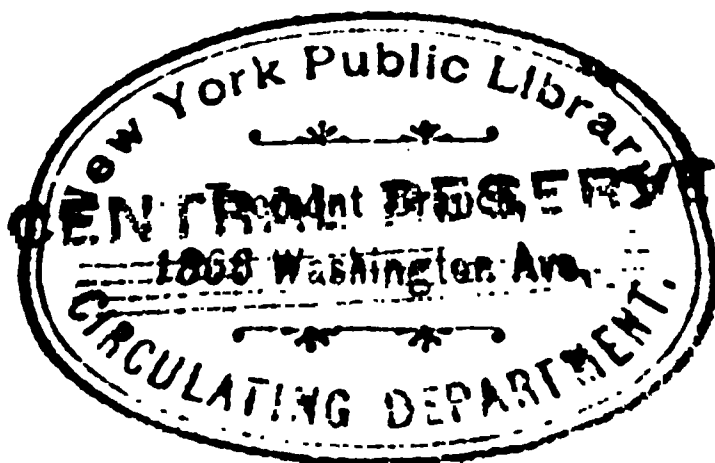
FIRST KAIL-WIFE.

Ill-hanged thief! If at that time thou wentest to Court thou hadst been weel hanged, thou hadst not been here to be a pest to God's Kirk this day!

SECOND KAIL-WIFE.

Fy an' I could get the thropple¹ out of him!

¹ Throat.



[*The BISHOP OF EDINBURGH mounting the pulpit endeavours to speak, but his voice is drowned in cries of*

“A Pope! A Pope! Antichrist! Pull him down! Stone him!”

[*The windows of the Kirk are broken with stones thrown by the rabble outside, who attack the Prelates as they try to walk down the street, till they are glad to escape in Lord Roxburgh's carriage, surrounded by his retinue, with drawn swords.*

SCENE II.

High Street, Edinburgh.

LORD LINDSAY *and the* EARL OF HOME *returning*
from a Meeting of the Scottish Council.

EARL OF HOME.

In sooth, Lindsay, that shrewd rascal of thine
That brought the news of my Lords of Traquair
And Roxburgh’s early rising hath weel
Merited of his Country !

LORD LINDSAY.

Ay, beshrew
The thirsty knave ! at two o’ the morning
Addling his fool’s pate in Davidson’s Tavern
With Scottish Two-penny ! Yet a good turn
Did his knavery for once, when he owerheard
Frae my Lord Traquair’s knave, his master’s matter.
Marked ye our two Lords’ faces at the Cross
Of Stirveling when the King’s Proclamation
For instant receiving of the Service Book

Being read, we rose and in due form of law
Protested in the name of Kirk and Country?

EARL OF HOME.

Ay, verily! that turn round Torwood wood
In the dim of the February morning
Served us a shrewd turn, for had they clapt eyes
Upon us then, hardly I wot had we
Won at the Cross of Stirveling! Heard ye word
Of my lord the Archbishop's wrath when news
Of that our morning's ride wan up to London?

LORD LINDSAY.

Nay, what said his Grace of Canterbury?
An ill pill was it doubtless for him to swallow!

EARL OF HOME.

A letter, yestreen a nimble runner
Brought me, from a good gossip at the Court,
Saith much of my Lord Laud's anger, likewise
Of the King's Grace's wrath, and specially
Of what befell therefrom to the poor knave,
Our Archie Armstrong, Fool to the King's Grace.

LORD LINDSAY.

Alack, poor Archie ! Weel do I know him !
Fool though he be likewise is he a right
True Scot ! Hath he too his fool's fingers brent
In the Archbishop's fire, that hath or now
Brent wiser folk ?

EARL OF HOME.

Ay that I wot hath he !
As thou shalt hear. When news of our matter
At Stirveling came to Canterbury's ears,
Forthwith in a great low of wrath, he posts
To the King's cabinet, and wha should run
Up in the corridor against his Grace
But Archie in a' his fool's toggery !
And coming softly up behind, whispers
He in his lug, " Wha's fule now ? Doth your Grace
Hear the news that's come from Stirveling anent
The Service Buik ? " With that his Grace fetched him
A shrewd blow with his staff, but Archie joukt,
(Like the Dean frae the Kail-wife's stool, here in
Sanct Giles !) sae for the nonce the jaw gaed by ;
But Archie forgat not his Grace's intent,

And when the King would have my Lord of Laud
At dinner to say grace, Fool Archie speired
Gin he might say it in his Grace's stead,
Quhilk the King granting for the sport, quoth he,
"All praise to God, little Laud to the Devil!"
Quhilk so inflamed his Grace against him that
He made complaint to the Council, who bade
The poor Fool to be whipped, his motley coat
Pulled ower his head, and he banished the Court.
Further, my gossip doth relate how he,
Meeting him after in a sober suit
Of black, (he knowing not what had befallen,)
Asked him of his Fule's coat, "Oh," quoth Archie,
"My Lord of Canterbury hath ta'en it
Frae me, because either himself or some
Of the Scottish Bishops may have use o't
Themselves; a black coat hath he given me
To cover up my knavery withal!"

LORD LINDSAY.

Poor knave! yet mair nor a fule's fingers hath
The Archbishop's fire brent and for less offence!
Ower weel do worthy Dr Leighton's cheeks

Prynne’s, Bastwick’s, Burton’s ken the taste
Of his Grace’s branding-irons !

EARL OF HOME.

In verity !

There be that deem England no safe place now
For men free-born ! Wha fain would worship God
By light of His ain Word and their conscience
Maun even cross the brine and do it wi’
The wild beasts in the woods o’ the Far West ;
—Gif or they win, the sea swallow them not !—
God grant the May-flower hath won safe to shore !

LORD LINDSAY.

Ay, and preserve this our poor Scottish Realm
Frae Star-chambers and High-Commissioners,
And frae my Lord Laud’s branding-irons !—Yet
Will Scotland sell her freedom dear ! Witness
This gathering of nobles and gentry
Ay, of farmers and of burghers, yea e’en
The very serving-wenches and kail-wives
O’ the Lawn-Market !

EARL OF HOME.

In sooth Dean Hanna
 And my Lord Bishop had had but short shrift
 In Sanct Giles' Kirkyard, but for the retinue
 And coach of my Lord Roxburgh! And heard
 Ye how the Glasgow dames handled "Mess John,"
 —As they ca' Mister William Annan,—when
 He preached uphauding of the Service Buik?
 At him with fists and staves and peats, (nae stanes
 I wot his hat and coat and ruff that day
 Saw service the last time!

LORD LINDSAY.

The Magistrates
 They say were fain to keep a calm sough ower
 That matter, knowing that the Dames were all
 Amang the chief folk o' the town!

EARL OF HOME.

God grant
 His grace to the Four Tables, we this day
 Appointed for management of His Cause!

Likewise a Free Parliament and a Free Assembly
To this our poor afflicted Realm !

LORD LINDSAY.

Amen !

For in good sooth the Fiery Cross hath past
Through all our Land, baith in its length and breadth !

SCENE III.

Greyfriars’ Kirk, Edinburgh, March 9, 1638.

*An immense concourse of people filling the whole Kirk
and Kirkyard. ARCHIBALD JOHNSTONE, a young
Advocate, reading from a written paper.*

“Hereby we do profess, and solemnly, before God
and His angels, and the world declare, that with our
whole hearts we agree and do resolve, all the days of
our life to adhere unto and defend the true Religion ;
and to labour to restore the Gospel’s purity and lib-

erty as before late innovations it was established and professed. Likewise to stand to the defence of our dread Sovereign the King, his person and authority, both with our means and lives.”

FIRST ONLOOKER (*a stranger*).

Who is't that reads?
Somewhere I've seen that face and heard that voice.

SECOND ONLOOKER (*an Edinburgh citizen*).

'Tis very like, gif ye were at the Cross
The day of the King's Proclamation here ;
At that same time and place the nobles caused
This same Archibald Johnstone to proclaim
Their Protestation. . 'Tis the Advocate
Most the Commissioners do trust ; 'tis said
His pen drew up our Covenant.

FIRST ONLOOKER.

And this,
That riseth now ?

SECOND ONLOOKER.

John Campbell that of Lawer,

Whom at his Coronation the King gave
A share in his wife’s title, Loudon now ;
The eloquentest man among them all.
Hist ! What says he ?

LOUDON (*speaking earnestly*).

I do beseech you as
In God’s name, friends, that ye do keep yourselves
Together in a Cause common to all.

SECOND ONLOOKER.

Ay, there he hits the nail upon the head !
Keep but together and who dares to thrust
His hand out on our Thistle ? See the folk
Bow down their heads and sob ! This Covenant
Will ne’er be signed with ink but with Scotland’s
Hot tears and blood.

FIRST ONLOOKER.

Ay, faith ! frae John o’ Grots
(Saving black Aberdeen,) to Solway’s shore !
—Loudon sits down ; who rises now to pray,
With yon mild, grave, strong face and pointed beard,
And dark soft hazel eye ?—a man to mark.

SECOND ONLOOKER.

Ay, verily ! 'Tis Mister Henderson
 From Leuchars ower the Firth ; a mighty man
 Of valour ; he that fought at Perth against
 The Articles (that thin end o' the wedge
 Of Papistry and Prelacy, in our
 Poor Kirk ;) and was of them that wrote anent
 The Perth Assembly, proving it was void ;
 Of them too who petition 'gainst the Book
 Now to Sanct Andros. Hist ! he prays ;

[MISTER HENDERSON'S *prayer ended*.

Amen ! Look what a handy forest, now
 He bids the hands that be ready to sign
 Our Covenant be raised ! Not one right hand
 But springs to meet the summons, as war-steeds
 Spring at the trumpet's call ! The heads drop *now*
 Down on the tight clasped hands, all wet with *tears*.
 Mid the deep silence nought save stifled sobs !
 Look ! there slow rises good auld Sutherland,
 And solemnly through the great multitude
 That reverently make way, the grey head moves
 To the Clerk's Table,—eldest, so the first

To sign. How the worn fingers shake that hold
The pen, and the great tears roll slowly down
The furrowed cheeks !—Lord ! What a shout was
that !

—A Nation's shout of "Liberty or Death,"
As that first name begins the mighty roll
Of Scotland's children who for Christ His Crown
And Covenant make oath to do or die !
See how eyes flash through tears, and hand clasps
hand,
And all the mighty crowd rise to their feet,
Waiting impatient each their turn to sign,
New eager fingers ready for the pen
Or the last name be writ !—yet ordered all
And solemn, as each knew, weel it may be
For Death, as weel as "*till* Death," as some write !
—Now all within have signed ; See ! the Clerks bear
The Parchment to the Kirkyard ; let us go
And see the signing of the folk without.
They say some sixty thousand true Scots hearts
Be gathered here from North, South, East and West,
To add their names unto our Nation's Bond.
Why what a roar is that ! as though the sea
Did burst its bounds and roll unto High Heaven

The voice of many waters,—Deep calling
To Deep ! A sound as of a mighty host
That shouts for victory ! 'Tis so they greet
The Clerks that bear our Covenant.—See ! ther
They clear the folk frae yonder flat grave-stone
And lay the Parchment there, while young Joh
And Mister Henderson stand either side,
And all the thousands come and sign and go !
Mid sobs and tears and solemn joy.—See ! som
Open a vein and sign with their red blood !

FIRST ONLOOKER.

God grant these be the only tears and blood
To wet our Covenant !

SECOND ONLOOKER.

God grant it ! Yet
Sairly my heart misgives, yon Bond sall be
Wetter and redder baith or all be done !

SCENE IV.

*Glasgow, Meeting of the General Assembly,
November 1638.*

MR ROBERT BAILLIE, *Minister of Kilwinning, and*
MR JAMES BONAR.

BAILLIE.

Unhappy servants to so good a master !
They cause the world suspect the King intends
Not keeping of his word ! So negligent
Of their most gracious Master's honour. Both
Our Parliament and our Assembly hath
Our sweet Prince granted at once. Argyle was
Very plain with him, men say ; nought he
Dissembled of our Country's grievances,
Nor of his own full mislike of the Book,
The Articles of Perth, Misgovernment
O' the Bishop's ; nor yet his own resolve
To leave the Country rather than consent
Pressing of any, (let be of himself,)
With these burdens against men's consciences

MR JAMES BONAR.

Yet was the Declaration of the Lord
 Commissioner but to restore Council and Session,
 With no word of our Covenant,—(whereat
 Archibald Johnstone did protest,) likewise
 At dinner afterward his Grace did cause
 Our nobles, (all save Southesk and Argyle,)
 Approve that Declaration as enough.

BAILLIE.

Ay, to our grief.

MR JAMES BONAR.

Quoth Loudon to his Grace

“We know no other band betwixt a King
 And subjects but Religion and the Laws,
 If these be broken men’s lives be not dear;
 Boasted¹ we will not be, such fears are past.
 Nor rested he till that subscrivèd Act
 Was gotten back and rent in pieces small;
 Quhilk dealing made us speak our right from

¹ Threatened.

(Which the Prince may not take from us,) to keep
Our General Assembly.

BAILLIE.

The event
I groan to think on ! 'Tis the highest string
Yet our necessities have caused us strike !

MR JAMES BONAR.

Men say our Lord Commissioner sees not
His godly mother, Lady Anne, and tare
In rage, his brother's Patent for Dunbar ;
Yet at first coming friendlier he seemed,
At his great entry,—like a King's,—at Leith.

BAILLIE.

'Twas a great entry ! ay, and like a King's !
Nobles and gentry of all Shires, Women
A world, the Town of Edinburgh all
Met at the Water-gate, and on the Links'
Brae-side, five hundred of us ministers
All in our Cloaks, and Mister Livingstone,
(Strongest of voice, and most austere of face
Among us all,) waiting to welcome him !

MR JAMES BONAR.

Yet hearing his harangue invectives held
Against the Bishops, his Grace discharged him,
Calling harangues in public, above his place,
Meet only for a Prince.

BAILLIE.

Moved was his Grace
To pity, e'en to tears, and wished the King
Were present at that sight, of a whole Country,
For their Religion and their Liberties,
Beseeching so humbly and earnestly !
Would he had his will, for evil men
Do, on the innocent back of our Prince
Lay their own crimes !

MR JAMES BONAR.

How lies your mind anent
Our matters since our Lord Commissioner
Would have the Lords of Session sign the King's
And quit our Covenant? and when blank they
Refused, would have Episcopacy made
Not questionable at this Assembly?

BAILLIE.

Lately I was in mind that in *no* case
Might any Prince have been opposed, but now
Incline I to think otherwise ; yet much
I dread, (gif so be that his Grace the King's
Commissioner depart,) a field of blood,
And thereafter a poor starved province, at
Devotion of a faction too suspect
Both in Law and Religion.—But in State
Matters we meddle not, only to pray
For our dear Father, King Charles, and our
Poor Mother, Scotland's Kirk and Kingdom. Gif
They should discord much blood and many tears
'Twill cost their bairns !—God—who is Father to
Them both, send them good greance !¹

MR JAMES BONAR.

Amen !—Here

Be we at the Kirk door. How the folk throng !

*[An immense jostling crowd of ministers and
laity pressing in at the door of the Great
Church. Baillie and his friend nearly
carried off their feet.]*

¹ Agreement.

BAILLIE.

Here might we learn from Canterbury, yea
 From Pope or Turk or Pagan, modesty
 And manners!—At the least their reverence
 In the House they call God's, gif it stop not
 Till they adore its timber and its stones!
 So far the other way our rascals make
 Sic din and clamour in God's very House,
 That gif they minted use the like in mine
 Own chamber I were not content till they
 Were down the stairs!

*[They struggle in, and at last
 get into their places.]*

At last, though sair for-foughten,¹

We've entry to our rooms and get our breath!
 Let's note it weel, 'tis a rare gathering this,
 Our Kirk's First General Assembly met
 For thirty years! See! yonder sits his Grace,
 The King's Commissioner in his chair of State,
 And at his feet, before and on both sides,
 The chief men of the Council,—Treasurer,
 Lord Privy Seal, Argyle, Murray, Southesk,

¹ Out of breath.

And many moe.—At yon long table on
The floor,—nobles, barons, commissioners
From Presbyteries, elders of Parishes,
Roths, Montrose, Weems, Loudon, Keir and moe,
And round, rising up five or six degrees,
In good commodious rooms, the chief Burgess
Of every Burgh ; three from maist the whole
Sixty and three of our Kirk's Presbyteries :
The little table yonder in the midst,
Set fore anent my Lord Commissioner,
Is for our Moderator and the Clerk ;
Quhilk is our learned Mister Henderson,
(Though ill we spare his pleading, tyning so
Our best disputer—yet none saving him
Was found with parts for such occasion ;)
For Clerk, a nonsuch is our Archie Johnstone !
See how the people throng ! Young noblemen,
Ladies and gentlewomen and the rest
Up yonder in the vaults ! Hist ! They begin !
First business is our auld Assemblies' Books
That our good Archibald hath brought to light,
Preserved in God's notable Providence,
Despite our negligence, and the desire
This forty years within the prelates' hearts

For covering in darkness of our auld
 Assemblies' Records, quhilk crossed their intents !
 Listen ! His Grace protests ! Yet with one voice
 The whole Assembly doth accept the Books
 As our Kirk's true authentic registers !
 Next purpose is anent the Bishops' matter ;
 —Of the Kirk's jurisdiction, their denial ;—
 The Moderator doth require the voice
 Of the Assembly. “ Gif they do find themselves
 The Bishops' Judges ? ”—Now his Grace would have
 The Clerk to read the King's will as subscribed
 And signed.

[The Clerk reads the King's Proclamation.]

Assuredly sundry things grants
 He to our will ;—yet right security
 Giveth of nought.

MR JAMES BONAR.

The Moderator now
 Riseth to speak. Hist ! let us hear !

BAILLIE (*after the Moderator's speech*).

Most grave
 Digest and learned ! a speech worthy our Cause !

Giving for the great favours of the King
Due thanks ; telling how much we count ourselves
Obliged in conscience to give to the King
Even in Kirk matters ; he speaks as it
Becomes good Christian and good subject ; yet
"Are we the Bishops' Judges ?" aye presses
The voicing.—Now there doth fall a sad and grave
And sorrowful discourse ! Hear how doth break
His Grace's voice ! The tears stand in his eyes,
As much he saith of his sincere desire
To serve his God, his Country, and his King,
And of his grief yet his necessity
To part ; seeing the spoiling of this free
Assembly by writs from Edinburgh,
Likewise precipitate intrusion of
The Laick voice therein ; how he behooves
Renew his protest in his Master's name,
And in the names of Lords and Clergies, that
Nought here done is lawful, and discharge them
Further to proceed. Mark how sad a face
Our Lord Commissioner wears in departing !

MR JAMES BONAR.

Verily,

I pity him ! Oft hath he vented not
His wish alone, but hopes and confidence
To sit till to some good conclusion all
Was brought ; likewise 'twas bruited, that, will -
Or nill he, he behoved to take this charge
Upon him, quhilk he at the first declined,
Fearing all utterly to lose those whom
The least he would ; his gracious Master, or
His native Country ; yet was no remeid
Against the King's most peremptor demand.

BAILLIE.

My heart pities the man, yea and his speech
From many eyes drew water and I wot
From mine much, seeing therein the surety
Of tragedies inevitable ; for,
(Other evils beside,) no means be left
To him, for good construction of his own
Fidelity, but offer of his service
To overthrow his Country ; wherein gif
He prosper, evermore will Scotland curse
The day a child so hapless she brought forth ;
Or gif with Fortune he unfortunate
Should prove, that favour of his Master, aye

Ower dear, will take it wings, leaving him lone
In seas of trouble, wherein he is like,
From breast of any man to get small pity,
Save from that one of Christ, who useth not
To desert those who are of all deserted !

SCENE V.

Dunse-Law, evening of June 18, 1639.

MR ROBERT BAILLIE *and* LORD LINDSAY.

BAILLIE.

Never fand I my mind in better temper
Than all this time frae that I came from home
On June's first day, to this our brave rich hill
Garnished with cannon towards the South and East,
Where the King's camp lies glittering in the sun,
Some six miles off on other side the Tweed,
In yon fair plain along the river bank.
God's favour have I fand shining on me,
Yea a most strong and vehement, yet sweet

And humble Spirit leading me ; for I
Have been as one who hath ta'en leave of all
The World, in this service resolved to die
Without return. Now all hath end ! This eve
The last whereon our sweet Dunse-Law shall hear
Singing of Psalm, or words of Holy Writ,
Or voice of prayer from out our sojourns' huts ;
Or see our flags,—with this ditton stamped round
Our Lion, “ For Christ's Crown and Covenant,”
In golden letters,—'fore each Captain's tent ;
Or our great little, crooked General
At e'en ride from the Castle at its foot,
With Bayley, his Lieutenant, through the Guard,
(Hope's Musketeers and Durie's,) well apparelled
Standing with matches cocked, before his gate ;
Nor will Argyle's uncanny trews-men fright,
(Though few,) England's admiring gaze with targe,
And plaid, and dorlach ! At the morrow's morn
(Articles of Pacification read,)
We fire our huts, strike Standards, go our ways,
And thank God for this bloodless victory !

LORD LINDSAY.

Think ye the King means faithfully ? Men say

Argyle got but cold welcome when he went
With other of our nobles to their camp,
To kiss the King's hand ; and 'twas thought contrar
His mind was Hamilton's advice to let
Loudon's protest against the Bishops as
Members of our Assembly, go with all
The rest. The folk of Edinburgh grieve
To see their Castle to Ruthven rendered,
Whom sore they hate ; nor comes—ere it break up—
The King's Grace, as he promised, to our Camp ;
Nor mints he to stir from our Borders, quhilk
Makes many much suspect that nought is sought
But to gain time for in-coming of more
English and Irish to his help ; and that
Our tenderness unto his honour—quhilk,
At Robin Leslie's word, gart us renew
Our supplication, rather than compel
The King's Grace granting of our just demands,—
Was to our own undoing.

BAILLIE.

Nay, joyful
At heart am I of this divine conclusion !
Gin we had been ten times victorious

In battles set, still our conclusion was
At the King's feet to have laid down our arms,
And on our knees presented nought but our
First supplications. No crowns did we seek,
Aimed at no lands nor honours ; we desired
But, as our forbears did, to keep our own
In service of our Prince. Were our throne voiced,
And voices sought for filling Fergus' Chair,
We would have died ere any other had
Sat down upon its fatal marble save
Charles alone ;—for aye the longer still
The better loved is our sweet Prince, as one
Most just, most reasonable and most sweet.
Much and most free communing hath there been,
—'Tis like his Majesty's ears ne'er had been
Tickled with such discourses !—yet was he
Of all most patient, and of clear reason,
Loving,—enamoured much likewise of us,
Of Mister Henderson and Loudon maist.
—What had we done had we to Tweedside come?
Wilful, to hazard of his person, might
The King have been ; had he brooked any skaith,
Or been disgraced with shameful flight, our hearts
Had broke for it !—I bless God He hath sent

In so fit time, a tolerable peace !
Comic catastrophe be our Dunse-Law,
Of our most fearful-like Episcopal
Tragedy !

—Nathless not yet have we got
Orders to make our solemn thanksgiving !
Yea some clouds still stick in our air ; so will
We keep at home till after Parliament,
All of our Countrymen,—soldiers who left
Their charges, to their own exceeding loss,
To help their boasted ¹ Mother-Kirk and Country ;
The quhilk our Nation never can repay.

¹ Threatened.



ACT III.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHARLES II.

JAMES GRAHAM, MARQUIS OF MONTROSE.

LORD NAPIER.

LORD OGILVY.

Sir GEORGE STIRLING of Keir.

Mister ALEXANDER HENDERSON, Minister of Leuchars.

Sir JAMES ROLLOCK.

The EARL OF LOUDON, Lord Chancellor.

The MARCHIONESS OF ARGYLE.

The LADY LOUDON.

Mistress ROBERT BAILLIE.

Mister PATRICK GILLESPIE, Minister of Kirkcaldy.

Three Soldiers of the Scots Army at Newcastle.

Three Onlookers at Proclamation of Charles II. as King, at
Cross of Edinburgh.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Camp of the Scottish Army at Newcastle. Three
Soldiers sitting over their Camp fire.*

FIRST SOLDIER.

WERT at the bonny bonfire on Dunse-Law that
June nicht when we fired our huts?

SECOND SOLDIER.

Na, I be but a raw recruit frae the plough's tail,
as mony ither a good fellow here, and little stomach
hae I yet for swords and pikes and sic-like devil's
tools! A plough noo turning up the sweet yearth
after rain, and me whistling ahint the bonny beasts
o' a bright breezy morning,—that's my trade! Wad
I were back at it on Solway-side! But when the ill

news cam, that the King, (for a' his word,) was marching back again at bidding o' the Bishops, ilk auld wife bode¹ up wi shears and bodkins in Stranraer, to help our Covenant! Sic bales o' claith they wove upon their wheels to theek² our tents here! Sic stocking-feet o' merks frae 'neath their beds they brocht our Minister! I mind he grat when ane o' them, Marget Jamie they ca' her, laid doun her posy, —shillings seventy-twa and ae braid piece o' gowd!— and when he speired how she was aught³ sae muckle siller, and she a poor man's wife, she said, "'Twas gathered for my ain young dochter's tocher;⁴ the Lord has taen her, sae He sall hae her tocher too." And weel I wot a man that pits his hand to plough in His quarrel, daurna look back!

THIRD SOLDIER.

My certes na! Shentlemans look not back! Yet wad a shentleman have thought that bonny June night when we set our huts a-low at the good shentleman, General Leslie's word—(a right true shentleman is he, and a worthy, howbeit his stature be not as that of Saul among the Prophets!) could ony shentle-

¹ Must.

² Thatch.

³ Owned.

⁴ Portion.

man have thought, say I, or other summer past that same goot shentleman the General with all the other goot shentlemans his soldiers wad be camped on the bonny Dunse-Law again in the same matters, for all the King's word of a shentleman?

FIRST SOLDIER.

Saw ye Montrose, how gallantly he rode first through the Tweed, wi a's men at his back?

THIRD SOLDIER.

Tweed swallowed ane !
'Tis an ill-omen, say we shentlemen of Argyle !

FIRST SOLDIER.

Tush ! be'st thou o' the whisperers that look wi' doubting een on our young brave Montrose? Threiping¹ the man is double and hath hid and secret dealings with the King his Grace? Lies kythed² of their ill minds ! Our gracious King,—though doubtless misled by that blear-eyed Laud, and ither of like kidney,—hatches nae plots ! Have ye not heard how sweet a conference he held at London with our

¹ Saying constantly.

² Bred.

Mister Henderson? And for the gallant Graham, *his* mettle's kent, proved in fu' mony a fight! At Aberdeen, at the sword's point he thrust our Covenant down malignant throats, as gallantly as his was the first foot in England ower the Tweed; out on all knaves whose ill-tongues whisper "fause"!

SECOND SOLDIER.

Yet hath the King's Grace ance again proclaimed us rebels since we crossed the Tweed! The brows o' mony lower, and maist o' them maist sib¹ in kith or kindness wi' James Graham! Fleming, his cousin; Drummond, his bedfellow; his ally Boyd! Men say our General in the Committee's face did charge him wi' letters sent privily to the King. Our Preachers' diligence and the cold of our great little General did shortlie cast water on this spunk that began to reek, else had been flame or lang! "Pride goes afore a fall," so saith the Word; through pride 'twas the deils fell, and proud as ony deil the gallant Graham!

THIRD SOLDIER.

Ay, shentlemen do say the Lord Montrose liketh

¹ Related.

not of the goot shentleman our General's command !
nor loves, as we shentlemen of Argyle, our great
MacCallum More !

FIRST SOLDIER.

On guard was I yon day the King's Grace dined,
here in our General's house, upon his way to Edin-
burgh :—maist pleasantly and sweet he spake to all,
nane that had converse with him but wad die or
they mistrust sae sweet a King ! Sairly men err,
dividing not betwixt our gracious King and wicked
Councillors ! And now in Edinburgh, men do say,
our good Mister Henderson, baith morning and night
before the supper, prays and reads the Word and
sings King David's Psalms there in the Palace, and
the King maist graciously hears all ;—Argyle himself
did welcome him ! In sooth not far his sweet Grace
frae the Kingdom !

SECOND SOLDIER.

Sae may God grant ! 'Tis a strange tale nathless
that, my Lord o' Loudon's knave frae London brocht !
Hoo his master, sent wi' our Assembly's griefs to lay
afore the Throne, straight was he clapt within the

Tower, charged wi' High Treason ! Nay the whisper ran, Sir William Balfour, at three o' the clock afternoon, command had o' the King's Grace, or nine next morning, should Earl Loudon's head be struck aff ! Ay, and the King stormed and swore roundly in his bed, or he, at Hamilton's maist urgent warning, tore sullenly the death-warrant ! Sae his knave, with him in London, (being sib to me,) doth sure asseverate : and all men ken in Edinburgh, hoo in her ain person his good ladye did in the Parliament petition help to her dear Lord in peril of his life within the Tower ;—yet as a true Scots dame, did qualify the same, praying the Lords, first to regard the weal o' Kirk and Country, or thinking on the plight o' her dear Lord ! Likewise, lies not the Lord Montrose e'en noo in ward in Edinburgh Castle, on the count o' letters o' the King's Grace sent to him, found sewn in saddle o' Traquhair's knave, Stewart ?

THIRD SOLDIER.

Ay and indeed ? and came there not a right goot shentleman of great MacCallum More's here yesterday at e'en, with word how his goot master with Hamilton

and Lanerick have taen but short goot night of the King's Grace, by reason of a plot brought to their ears by a goot shentleman of Argyle, betwixt the King's Grace and the Lord Montrose to lay them in a ship at Leith, and to its prisoner render up the Castle?

FIRST SOLDIER.

My ain een first mon see, or I can think, the gallant Graham and our sweet King be knaves!

SCENE II.

Banks of the Forth at Stirveling Bridge.

MONTROSE (*alone, humming to himself*).

“As Alexander I will reign,
And I will reign alone,
My thoughts did evermore disdain
A rival in my throne.”

Argyle first in their counsels! the crook-backed
Little Leslie in the Field! Montrose, what

Place for thee? Lieutenant 'neath the Crook-back?
 Councillor after Argyle? Nay my friends,
 It suits not with the mettle of Montrose!
 I signed your Covenant,—at sword's point thrus^t
 It on black Aberdeen!—but *first*, Montrose
 Or nowhere! Seek your Lieutenants elsewhere!
 Whate'er his Cause, chief Captain is Montrose!
 Yet haste, good Mister Alexander, glad
 James Graham awaits your coming for solving
 His doubts of Conscience! Innocent, good man!
 So shall he pump thee, find thy secrets, all
 The Covenanters' purposes and plans!
 How shouldst thou hide them? Thy transparent
 soul,

Clear as these limpid waters of the Forth,
 That all things mirror this still eve of June!
 — Then with them to the King!—'Tis true ^{the}
 Queen

Slighted me late at York, despised Montrose,
 Made Hamilton her Councillor, sent him
 To work in Scotland for the King!—Yet weel
 I wot his desperate straits or lang, will send
 His Majesty back to Montrose who fights,
 While Hamilton protests! Desperate his Cause!

Dear just *because* 'tis desperate, to Montrose !
Glory or Death, nor mickle reck's he which !

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all !"

Here come my Lords Napier and Ogilvy
And worthy George of Keir :—"Twas a wise thought,
Montrose, to call them here as witnesses,
Lest that the King mistrust thy conference
With poor good Henderson, King o' the Covenant !

[*Enter the LORDS NAPIER and OGILVY and*
SIR GEORGE STIRLING *of Keir.*

Good even, gentlemen, Montrose must e'en
Act host and bid welcome to Banks of Forth !

SIR GEORGE STIRLING.

Good even to the gallant Graham !

LORDS NAPIER AND OGILVY.

God speed

The brave Montrose !

.

MONTROSE.

Yonder he comes across
The Bridge, our learnèd Mister Henderson,
And with him Rollock my good-brother, now
Argyle's good-brother likewise. Both be come
For solving of the doubts that daunt Montrose!

[*Enter* MR ALEXANDER HENDERSON
and SIR JAMES ROLLOCK.

Welcome good Mister Alexander, you
Too good brother George! These banks of Forth
Make sweet withdrawing-room this still June eve
As ever ladye's Bower! The river's glass
Doubles the glories of the yellow whin
And broom and milk-white thorn so close that grow
Upon its edge, and what a carpet makes
This green-sward spangled ower with butter-cup
And gowan! What ceiling like yon blue vault
Ower-head? What music like the linties' tunes
In ilka brake, or June be past and come
The time to warm their nest and quit their sangs?
Right happy deems himself Montrose, that here
The learnèd Mister Henderson deigns come

For solving of his doubts,—a man on whose
Wisdom, fidelity, and honesty
So sure he can rely, in matters how
Weighty soever. For some time by-past
Quiet hath he lived at home, (so to remove
Jealousies of his foes, some differences
Have late engendered) ; hence knoweth he nought
Anent your late Convention ;—at loss thus
In this so ticklish time, how it behoves
Him act, and therefore seeks his guidance whom
Most he may trust ; for whilk cause now he prays
Good Mister Henderson freely to speak
What 'tis designed to do.

MR ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

Right glad am I
To welcome back our gallant brave Montrose
To the good Cause of Kirk and Covenant !
Much grief it hath been unto many hearts
To doubt his fealty, greater now the joy
To know our doubts unjust ; in proof whereof
Freely I trust his honour with the plans
Resolved at our Convention. Since no help
There seems, save that, or ruin of our Cause,

(Whilk Cause is Christ's,) though with sair gr~~ave~~^{ef of}
heart,
Determined 'tis to levy a great force,
To aid our English brethren, and to march
Forthwith against the King.—God save his Grac~~eful~~^{ce,}
And from ill counsel turn his princely heart!—
For every man of us, in both his realms,
Is full resolved to die rather than yield
In this Cause, (whilk is Christ's); and if so be
Our brave Commander late, the Lord Montrose
Will, as afore his word was, lead our van,
Then hearty thanks will I return to God
That His poor Preacher He doth honour thus
In work so great to mediate, and weel
Am I assured nought that Montrose shall ask
Shall be denied of our Convention.

MONTROSE (*to Sir George Rollock*).

George,
Sib long to me, through my dear sister dead,
Thy first sweet Dame, and Argyle's brother now,
Be thou spokesman betwixt us. Let me wot
Gif worthy Mister Henderson doth make

These offers of his ain good will, or gives
In name of the Convention ?

SIR GEORGE ROLLOCK.

Doubtless, Sir,
Good Mister Alexander hath the mind
Of the Convention,—speaketh in its name.

MR ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

Nay, good my Lord, I speak but as I deem ;
Yet never doubt but the Convention will
Bear out my utmost word.

MONTROSE.

Never Montrose
Makes bargain in sic wise with private folk,
Without the public faith to lean upon
Ahint them ! Good Mister Henderson, mickle
It irks Montrose to say thee nay, yet no
Conclusion may he make with private man,
Even wi' sic man as Mister Henderson.
—Good e'en good friends and comrades ane and all !
The shades begin to fall e'en on this night

O' June when days are langest, and afar
Montrose maun be or midnight!—Fare ye weel!

*[He mounts his horse, muttering
as he rides away—*

I could not lie straight in his simple face
With promise false of help,—though wiser mayhap!
—Now to the King at Oxford with their news!

SCENE III.

*House of Mistress Robert Baillie, wife of the
Minister of Kilwinning.*

THE MARCHIONESS OF ARGYLE, THE LADYE
LOUDON, MISTRESS ROBERT BAILLIE.

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Good Mistress Baillie, thou hast news anon
Frae thy dear spouse in London. How goes all?
What saith he of the King's Grace' dispositions?
Will he accept the Propositions o'
The Parliament?

MISTRESS BAILLIE.

Nay, good my Ladye, that no man
May tell—so writes my minister.—Much talk
There is, he saith, of the King’s obstinacy :
Gif he wad do his duty, spite all knaves,
All in one moment would go right, he deems.
By God’s help will they try to make him take
The Covenant, and follow to the full
His Parliament’s advice, gif he do so
Expect a happy issue, but gif so be
That God hath hardened him, the Parliament
Will strive to have him in their power to make
Example of him. Yea, my master saith
He doth abhor to think what they do speak,
—Even of his execution ! Nay, diverse
Of whom he least expected it, are for
Putting away of the whole royal race !

LADYE ARGYLE.

May God forfend !

MISTRESS BAILLIE.

Very pathetic writes

The King for peace. Yea five or six times writ
 Or answer came,—and then a cold one.
 That Parliament conceived not for his good
 Nor for his people's that he to London come,
 Till first he grant the Propositions.
 Not all the Royalists in Scotland could
 Have pleaded for the Crown and King's just power
 As did the Chancellor and Warristone
 For many days together, so he saith.

LADYE LOUDON.

My noble Lord! Little ill-will he bears
 For his so deadly peril in the Tower!
 When he was sent to lay the Assembly's griefs
 Before the Throne, and but for warning sharp
 Of my Lord Hamilton, the King had struck
 His head off!

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Sore truly was his peril!
 Most Christianly Lord Loudon doth forgive!

LADYE LOUDON.

Think ye 'tis true, what darkly many whisper

The King’s ain hands be not ower clean of that
Ulster Deil’s-orgy made our blood run cold?
—Women ripped up, bairns thrown unto the swine,
Men hung up by the hands and lashed to death
To see how many blows an Englishman
Could bear or he quite died?—My good Lord
Did write me privily the rebels brought
Commission with the King’s broad seal to it,
As warrant for their crimes ; and certain ’tis
The King’s Grace did, under the Great Seal, give
Commission to their leaders to take arms.

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Ower-like ’tis true ! Why not with Antrim when
He traffics with Montrose ? We had a taste
Of these same Irish devils in Argyle,
Joined with the Highland kernes of the fause Graham !
The bonny ricks and wee theekt biggings ¹ brent,
And ilka gallant Campbell lad they caught
In cold blood murdered ! till a desert all
Bonny Argyle ! And when my noble Lord,
Hasting to help his slaughtered Highland folk,
Fell from his horse, and hurted sore could use

¹ Thatched cottages.

Nor sword nor pistol, was of his good friends
 At Inverlochy forced into his boat,
 Men called him coward, and said he fled the fray!
 —Waur still that devil of Montrose and his
 Wild Irish dealt at Abirdene—"To kill
 And none to spare," the cruel fiend bade, and weel
 The word suited their Irish stomachs! Nought,
 Men say, was heard but howlings pitiful,
 And crying through the streets for four full days!
 Nor let they e'en the Dead be buried, but
 Territ¹ their claithes and let them naked lie;
 Nor daured wife weep her husband, nor mother
 Her son or presently they too were slain!
 So in the King's Cause fights that Fiend James
 Graham!

MISTRESS BAILLIE.

Never man did the King waur service than
 Montrose, so saith my minister, flattering
 His madness which confounds them all. Men say
 At Philiphaugh 'mang his papers was found
 A letter he writ to the King, that turned
 His Grace's heart, all in one woeful night,

¹ Tore off.

Frae what had brought him peace ! At supper all
At the Royal table were right gay at heart,
The King conceding all ; and when he ’plained
Of badness of the wine, quoth ane, “ We trust
Your Majesty will better drink or lang
With the Lord Mayor at Guildhall.” That same
night

Montrose’s letter came, writ to the King
After his woeful victory at Kilsyth :
“ Give me but leave,” he writ, “ when I have brought
This country from Dan to Beersheba,
Unto your Majesty’s obedience, then,
As David’s General to his master said,
Say I to the King’s grace, “ Come thou thyself,
Lest by my name this land be called.”—Next morn
Utterly was the king’s mind changed, nocht wad
He cede !—My minister aye threips Montrose
’Tis, that will prove fatal unto the King,
Buoying him up with lying promises
Unto his undoing !

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Thinks he, the king
Will grant the Propositions ?

MISTRESS BAILLIE.

Ay, ower late!

Aye hath it been, he saith, his constant ill
Nothing to give in time, all things he gives
At last, but ever he hath lost the thanks,
His gifts account extorted and constrained.
To William Murray o' the King's Bedchamber
"As you would thankful to your Master be
For all his favours, now flatter him not
Unto his ruin;" so he writ:—for great
My husband's love and pity for this poor
Perishing Prince. "The king's madness," he saith,
"Confounds us all."

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

In Ireland my good Lord,
For men to cast the traitors from Argyle.
Sae scant my news frae Court;—tells he aught,
Good Mister Baillie, of the King's coming
To our Scots' Army?

MISTRESS BAILLIE.

That he doth! The Van

' the Army o' the Parliament was close
 n Oxford. At midnight rode three men forth
 'he toun, one in a groom's garb, porte-mantle
 hint him on the saddle ;—'twas the King,
 'arson Hudson, and Ashburnham his man.
 Early of a May morn, nine days thereafter,
 Into our camp at Kelham came the King ;
 With all honour, as meet, received he was,
 On his knees did our General present
 His sword. The King himself at first wad fain
 'lay General, giving the watchword, but
 'uld Leslie told him in his hamely way,
 eing the older soldier he would spare
 His Majesty that fash !¹ Men suspect,—sae
 ith my Minister, the Scots o' plotting
 His coming to our Army, but in truth
 Never anent it had we dealings with
 The King. Had he not feared, either to be
 Clapped in perpetual prisonment, or
 Execute, gif in Oxford taen, ne'er nigh
 Js had he come ! Gif he will not return
 Upon just terms, what to do with him, weel
 They cannot tell ;—the leading party nought

¹ Trouble.

So much desire as that he should refuse
The Propositions of the Parliament,
So they may deal with him as they have mind.
“Gif that man goeth now to tinkle on
Bishops, Delinquants, and such foolish joys,
It seemeth he is mad !” sae Robert writes.

LADYE LOUDON.

Sorely is Scotland struck, both with the Pest
And sword. Hard is't to understand the Lord's
Dealings with her ! Surely He meaneth not
Her to destroy, maintaining His ain Cause?

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

What saith thy Minister, of Cromwell's Sect?
And likewise of the man?

MISTRESS BAILLIE.

The man he holds a wise and active head,
Weel-loved of all, and as religious as
He's stout : but for the Independants, they
Do deviate more and more, he saith, towards
Errors baith auld and new ; especially
To Liberty of Conscience, saying all,

To publicly profess their conscience, should
 Be let, and live according thereunto,
 Weren't never so erroneous, so thereby
 They trouble not the public peace. E'en Jews
 And Papists, Turks and Infidels ! "Beware"
 Saith he "Of that pernicious liberty
 To all !"

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Here comes a runner frae Argyle !
 God grant he bears good news o' my dear Lord !
[Enter a Highland gillie with letters.]
 Hast letters, Donald ? Void thy scrip in haste !

DONALD.

My Ladye of Argyle we deemed not here !
 My Lord's ain man swift as a deer doth run
 To Inverara ower the heather hills
 Wi' Argyle's budget ;—for Mistress Baillie these,
 Through favour of the Ladye of Argyle.

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Alack ! and must I wait my dear Heart's words
 Frae Inverara back-coming ! Break seal,
 Good Mistress Baillie !—How goes all ?

MISTRESS BAILLIE (*reading from a letter*).

“ MY HEART,—The King’s answer hath broke our hearts! Afraid are we of the hardness of God’s decrees against that madman. After all possible endeavours, unanimous of all, Scots, English, French, the King the Propositions hath refused! On Monday come the Chancellor and Argyle, with them England’s Commissioners; we do fear sad votes in the Houses after their report. Our aim will be to hold them back from sudden measures. Very long time they take to smallest things, yet I fear they be too quick disposing of the King! Many do think his obstinacy judicial, as if he were, in God’s justice, bound himself to destroy. Mister Henderson lies dying at Newcastle—mostly of heart-break.—Grief and anxiety makes me cut off.

Farewell my dearest heart.”

THE LADYE ARGYLE.

Alack, poor Charles!
Whom the gods ruin, they do first make mad!

SCENE IV.

*Committee of Estates and Crowd at the Cross of
Edinburgh, Monday, February 5, 1649.*

LOUDON THE CHANCELLOR (*in robe of black
velvet, reading proclamation*).

"Hereby do we proclaim Charles the Second by the Grace of God, King of Brittain, France, and Ireland—but likewise that before being admitted to the exercise of his royal power, he shall give satisfaction in those things that concern the Security of Religion according to the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant.—"God save the King!"

The great Concourse echoing

"God save the King! God save the King!"

FIRST ONLOOKER.

Ay, save him from the bloody murderers
That slew his sire! Hast heard how Pride did purge
The Parliament that voted him to death?

Not one good Presbyterian there—thank God!
Sectaries to a man ! Forty staunch members
Laid by the heels in prison,—some hundred
Turned frae the door by soldiers' pikes ! The Rump,
So shorn of honourable men, 'twas voiced
His death.

SECOND ONLOOKER.

Surely a bloody murder ! Weel
For Scotland she hath had nae hand in it !
And now she first proclaims his son her King.

THIRD ONLOOKER.

Yet be there reservations in the deed !
Or he, Charles the Second, King by Grace
Of God, shall exercise his royal power,
First maun he sign our Nation's Covenant,
Likewise that Solemn League and Covenant
His father bogled at. Think ye he'll sign ?

FIRST ONLOOKER.

God grant it ! for no King will Scotland brook
Save murdered Charles' son ! The Prince is young,
But eighteen summers ower his bonny brow,

ie will have good guidance ; wise Argyle,
Loudon here, and mony a godly Preacher,
ough Mister Alexander rests with God,
efore we thank Him,) or this dismal day.

THIRD ONLOOKER.

l tongues threip we Scots did sell our King,
acred person who did trust with us,
ng for refuge to our Army ; gave
back for England's Parliament to slay !
s an ill-sounding that Malignants' rhyme,

“Traitor Scot

Sold his king for a groat.”

ye how verily the matter stands ?

FIRST ONLOOKER.

st malignant Malignants' Rhyme !
etter of it true ! At his ain choice
the King's Grace to Holmby House, when our
did England quit, with guarantees,
baith the Houses of his Parliament,
afety of his person, full and sure ;
or the six and thirty carts o' cash

The vile Malignants ca' the price o' blood,
'Twas but arrears of our poor soldiers' pay,
—Nor yet one-fourth their due,—agreed five months
Afore or ever the King's Grace left us
At Newcastle.

SECOND ONLOOKER.

Thank God nae kindly Scot
Doth bear the wyte of our poor Prince's blood!
Men say he made a very gracious end?

FIRST ONLOOKER.

O' that be sure! Whate'er our Prince's faults
Ever he bore him kingly. Aye a Stuart
Kens how to die! "Nought in their life," as hath
Good Master Shakespeare, oft "becomes them as
The leaving it." His father, honest man,
Died in his bed; but grandly, afore him,
(For all a Papist,) did his grand-dame lay
Her head upon the block at Fotheringay.

SECOND ONLOOKER.

'Twas but the soldiers shouted,—so say they
That brought the news yestreen,—all other burst

Out into tears and lamentations, when
The black-masked executioner held up
The bloody head on the black scaffold ’fore
The Whitehall Banquet House ; and when they read
His deed o’ accusation in the Court,
As in the name o’ England’s people, then
A woman’s voice cried frae the galleries,
“Not the tenth part o’ them !” (’Tis said the
voice

Was of my Lady Fairfax.) This foul deed
Is not the English people’s,—nor the Scots’,—
But General Cromwell’s and his Sectaries’,
And the docked Rump of the poor Parliament
Beneath their Army’s thumb !

THIRD ONLOOKER.

’Tis rumoured that
The letter Cromwell found at the Blue Boar
In Holborn, (where, as private soldier, he
Went with a single friend,) sewn in a saddle,
So to be sent to the Queen’s Majesty
In France, wherein the King bade her be easy
What concessions soever he might grant,
For when the time came right weel did he ken

To treat these rogues, and for a silken garter
To fit them wi' a hempen halter, was
His undoing.

FIRST ONLOOKER.

How dismal sad is this
Proclaiming the young King ! His father's corpse
Yet bloody at Whitehall ; and all hearts here
But yester e'en broke wi' the doleful news !
The very Heralds' Trumpets seem to sound
Gloomy forebodings ! Our eloquent Loudon,
In his black velvet robes, scarce choking down
His tears, to find a voice to name him King !
Our grim Gillespie Gromach, grimmer yet
Sae haggard and sae pale, belike in this
Sae lurid sunset's blood-red light forgies
E'en the Engagers ! Our worthy Ministers
In their black gowns, stand all downcast and sad ;
E'en the crowd's half-voiced cheers sob-stifled die !
May God from our young Prince avert its omens !

SCENE V.

Dumfermline, August 1650.

CHARLES II. (*alone, reading from letters and papers*).

"MY LORD, — I intreat you to go on vigorously and with your wonted courage and care in the prosecution of those trusts I have committed to you, and not to be startled with any reports you may hear, as if I were otherwise inclined to the Presbyterians than when I left you. I assure you I am upon the same principles I was, and depend as much as ever upon your undertakings and endeavours for my service, being fully resolved to assist and support you therein to the uttermost of my power, as you shall find in effect, when you shall desire anything to be done by,

Your affectionate friend,

CHARLES R.

"ST GERMAN'S Sept. 10, 1649."

(Reading from another paper.)

"So they now begin with his Majesty upon the

same scores they left with his father, declaring him King *with provisos*; so robbing him of all right, while they would seem to give some unto him."

'Twas thus I wrote to James Graham of Montrose
Not yet a year by-gone, and thus he made
His declaration of my kingly rights,
Against this vile Committee of Estates,
And snivelling Psalm-singers, their Preachers!—
'Lack!

My trusty servant and to what end brought!
When that news came to Breda then I knew
No hope save sign their canting Covenant!
Poor James! it was a desperate emprise!
But trusting aye his lying witches' word,
He deemed himself invincible, with his
Poor hundred Swedes, Germans, raw Orkney men,
And those wild boon-fellows Sibbald and Hay,
Urry and Harry Graham, reckless to share
With brave Montrose his fortunes or his fate!
When all was lost he threw his cloak away
That bore the Garter's Star my father gave,
His sword likewise, then left his horse behind,

And changing clothes with bare-legged Highland
kerne,

Three days or four he hid among the wilds,
Meatless and drinkless,—but Assint sold him !
'Tis said ransom he offered,—then would die
By their hands who had taen him,—all in vain !
At Southesk’s house he bade them bring his bairns,
Yet none saw change of face !—Then on a day
Of May at four hours of the afternoon
The truckling Covenanting Magistrates
And Hangman met him at the Watergate ;
And bare-head fastened on a cart with cords,
(Hangman for Coachman, with his bonnet on,
And gallows livery,) drove him through the town,
His declaration tied about his neck.

Never a word he said, save he was sorry
That in him the King’s Majesty so sore
Should be dishonoured ! At seven o’ the clock,
When by the Prison gate they set him down,
He gave the Hangman money, saying he
Reckoned that cart as his triumphal car ;
And when the ministers would question him,
Refused all answers till he knew what terms
They stood on with the King, his royal Master !

Poor faithful James ! prouder to have his head,
Be-combed and curled, (he told sour Warristone
While 'twas his own he would dress and adorn,
To-morrow when it should be theirs they might
Do with it as they would !) fixed on Tolbooth,
In witness of his loyalty to his King,
Than golden statue in the Market-place,
Or picture hung in the King's Bed-chamber !
And so in cloak of scarlet trimmed with gold,
And locks be-combed and curled, a gallant gentleman,
He went unto his death leaving his King
Bereft ! What for it then but swallow down
Their hateful Covenant !—Oh scrupulous
They be these snivelling hypocrites !—Have qualms !
Scarce Mister Livingstone was brought, it seems,
Aboard my ship at Tarhay, his mind bent
Backward to Rotterdam, saying he had
No light to go aboard seeing he feared
They took the Plague of God to Scotland ! 'Guiled
There at last of Cassilis and Hutchison !
—At the Spey's mouth maun pause or put the Test,
Until assured anent the King's sincerity !
The rest ower-ruled him, would the written bond !
A Covenanted King ! Ye have it, sirs !

Rest ye content ! What, doubtful yet ? Would have
Further a Declaration I lament
My father’s opposition, and renounce
Baith Popery and Prelacy ? How doth
It run ?

[Taking up a paper and reading from it.]

“No enemies will I have save
Enemies of the Covenant, no friends
Save of the Covenant friends !” Oh rest content !
Your Camel swallowed, Charles scarce strains at
gnats !

Here comes Mister Gillespie, pen in hand !

*[Enter MR PATRICK GILLESPIE and
other leaders of the Covenanters.]*

Welcome good Mister Patrick, and ye all
My Ministers, faithful and vigilant
Upholders of the Covenant ! Ye come
With your ain een to see, with his ain hand
Your King subscribe your Declaration ?

MR PATRICK GILLESPIE.

My Liege, it is our mission, yet if sae be
That in your soul and conscience ye be not
Beyond all hesitation satisfied

Of the subscription's righteousness, sae far
From over-driving of your Majesty
In this, I do obtest and charge you, in
My Master's name, not to subscribe, no not
For the three Kingdoms !

CHARLES II.

Mister Gillespie, Mister Gillespie
Satisfied I am, therefore will subscribe.

[MR GILLESPIE *puts the pen in the King's
hand, who subscribes the Declaration.*

ACT IV.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

**Covenanting Family in hiding towards the close of
“the Killing Time.”**

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Covenanter's family in hiding in a cave on the Solway shore, in the wilds of Galloway.

FATHER, MOTHER, BOY, GIRL, *and Baby*
at the breast.

Boy.

MITHER, its awfu' dark in here and cauld,
And see the water draps doun ower the moss
And wee ferns in the roof! I'm feart at nichts
To hear the howlets hoot, and the big waves
Roaring amang the rocks! And ye've nae bed
For our wee Meg but the green brackens me
And Jean pu' in the Laird's woods; can we no
Gang hame, and pit her in her wooden crib

Aside the peat fire, syne she'll sleep and no
Greet a' the nicht, and keep ye dawting¹ her?

GIRL.

Hoots, Will! div ye no ken we daurna bide
At hame in our ain wee theeked cottage on
The Merse, for Lag or Clavers' troopers wad
Shoot's a' in our beds?

Boy.

What wad thay shoot's for?

We've done nae ill.

GIRL.

Laddie, div ye no ken
Faither and Mither be Conventiclors
And gang to hear the outed ministers
Preach on the moss: sae ae day Lag's men cam
And thirled up our thack,² and pit their swords
Through Mither's feather-bed, seeking for them
To shoot: but being His folk, Jesus took
Tent to them,³ Mither says, for Faither was
Frae hame, (sae kind He was,) and Mither hid
Wi' wee Meg in our Brownie's byre aneath

¹ Petting.

² Turned up our thatch.

³ Care of them.

he strae, and we were at the schule, sae Lag
aed by for that time ; but we daurna bide
Or him or Clavers coming back again.

Boy.

ut wad they shoot us, Faither, gif they cam ?

FATHER.

y, lad, that wad they ! Mony a better man
and woman too they've shot upon the moss.
and mony an ane forbye, in Edinburgh's
rassmarket's sealed their testimony wi'
their blood. Gudewife, ye've store o' ballants cofft ¹
rae the auld blind Covenanting Chapman,²
et's while awa' the darkening wi' grand words
o' them that's gane afore, and kept the faith,
and learn the bairns hoo God's ain folk can dee.

MOTHER.

Whilk ballant, Faither, will ye hae ?—Davie
Had store o' them : there's mony a bonny tale
o' men and women, aye and wee weans too
For Christ His Crown and Covenant that chose

¹ Bought.

² Pedlar.

Suffering not sinning, thae bad “killing times”;
And a’ that Davie brocht, I hae by heart.

FATHER.

Gie us the Last Days o’ the great Argyle.
Hist ! bairns, and hear your Mither, and tak tent¹
Hoo for Christ’s Crown and Covenant men can die.

MOTHER (*reciting*).

Drunk Middleton sits in the Parliament Ha’,
Wi’ him his rabble crew,
The King’s Grace’ Advocate and a’,
Yet is their muster few.

Afore them stands the great Argyle,
Frae London-Tower brocht by the Sea,
Whar o’ his King he was taen by guile,
When he gaed to swear fealty.

“Not noo, ’tis Archibald, wi’ ye
As when ’twixt Cross and Tron
Ye set the flesh-stocks up,” quoth he,
Sir John Fletcher,² wi’ scorn :

¹ Take note.

² Pronounced Flesher

Gillespie Gromach turns his ee,
That baith ways looks, on him ;
“ A Flesher dog bites sair,” quo he,
Gillespie Gromach grim !

Not great Argyle it is, I grant,
That day on trial doth stand,
But for Christ’s Crown and Covenant
Our Covenanted Land !

Wi’ the King’s murder-crime they press,
And charges thirty mair,
Yet bode ilk ane disproved, confess,
Sae white the bill he bare !

Till at lang last a knocking rude
Comes at the chamber door ;
Then joyful lauch the hellish brood,
Good angels weep fu’ sore !

Frae traitor Monk a Campbell brings
Auld letters o’ Argyle ;
His doom they seal—though a’ the King’s
Men there writ like the while,

When ilka true Scot yet was fain
To bow at Cromwell's feet :—
Fause Middleton doth speak his bane,
Trumpet and drum they beat.

When stopt their din : “ I set the Crown
On the King's head, now he
Hastes me to better than his own,”
Quoth Argyle quietly.

“ The indemnity o' earthly King
Frae your hands do I miss,
Yet *His* ye canna frae me wring,
The King o' Kings who is.”

They bring him to the auld Tolbooth,
His ladye waiting there ;
A woefu' dame is she, in sooth,
When he comes up the stair.

“ Till Monday they hae gien to me
My Heart, wi' ye,” he said ;
The waters burst out frae her ee
As stream frae fountain-head.

“The Lord will it require !” she cries,

“The Lord will it require !”

Then throws her in his arms and lies

A thing o’ woe and ire.

“Forbear ! Forbear ! I pity them,

They know not what they do !

What walls soe’er they please may hem,

Shut God not out I trow !

Yea, am I as content this hour,

As in the Castle, here,

In Castle as content as Tower,

In Tower as any where.

And on the scaffold still hope I

There as content to be

As any o’ them a’ : then why,

Dear Heart, greet sae for me ?

Yea, shortly ye shall envy me

That am got on before ;

My skill doth fail, if, brethren, ye

Sin not or suffer sore.

Aye was I of a fearfu' mood,
A man o' thought, not sword,
Yet now a' fear my Lord sae good
Hath taken frae His coward.

I thought to have concealed His grace,
But that I canna noo."
He turns, the tears adown his face
Coursing, the window to,

Syne coming back, "I think," saith he,
"His kindness owercomes me !
Not all He lets out, lest I be
Owerwhelmed, sae good is He !

Get me my cloak and let us go ;
As Roman could I die,
Yet rather as a Christian so
Choose I right willingly.

Come away, gentlemen, he goes
Cleanliest who goes first."
Sae down the Tolbooth stairs wi' those
Toward the place accurst.

James Guthrie at the Tolbooth door
Stands for a last adieu :
“ My Lord, God hath been with ye, more,
Is with ye, shall be too ;

Were I not too in Death's sentence,
Glad wad I die for you.”
Sae part, wha met first Friday thence
In Better Place I trow !

With hat and cloak on, down the street
And mounts the scaffold then,
As to a Father's House 'tis meet
Glad a son turns again.

He justifies 'fore a' folk there
His loyalty to his king,
And warns them o' dilemma sair
'Twixt sin and suffering.

Then cheerful to the Headsman gies
Some tocher in a cloth,
Ker, Caithness, Loudon, Lothian, these,
Mementoes, naething loath.

Syne as he steps the Maiden to,
Hutchison in his ear,
“My Lord, haud your grip sicker noo!”
“Nay, I fear not to fear.”

A while he prays, syne wi' his hand
Beckons the Maiden's kiss,
That widowed leaves our poor Scots' Land
And weds his sawl to Bliss.”

FATHER.

Weel Davie's ballant tells hoo great Argyle
Grandly his testimony wi' his blood
Hath sealed: noo let us hear hoo simple folk
Like us, gudewife, have kent for Christ to die:
Gie us the Carrier's Ballant o' Priestsie.

MOTHER (*reciting*).

They shot him at his cottage door,
And his wife was standing near,
But never a word o' grief said she,
Nor dimmed her ee a tear.

They tied his hands ahint his back,
An’ bound his bonny een ;
But her face was white, and still, and cauld
As a dead face it had been.

She held his wee lass by the hand,
Their babe wrapped in her plaid,
And closer yet the bairn unborn,
Ne’er wad mak’ faither glad.

“This is the day I tellt ye o’,
Isabel, or we wed ;
Art willing, wife, I part frae thee
For Christ’s dear sake ? ” he said.

“Lang syne I wove thy winding-sheet,
As for a marriage-bed,
At blessèd Mister Peden’s word,
The nicht that we were wed ;

Heartily willing, John.” “’Tis all
I waited for,” said he
“ ‘ Oh death, where is thy sting ? Oh grave,
Where is thy victory ? ’ ”

Dragoons six, Clavers bade them fire,
But motionless stood they ;
He snatched his pistol frae his belt,
Wi' his ain hand did slay.

“ An' what think ye o' your gudeman noo,
Gudewife ? ” quoth Clavers rude ;—
A flash cam' i' the tearless ee,
To the white cheek the blude.

She walked wi' steady step an' prood,
To whar her gudeman lay,
She laid on her lap the shattered head,
An' she wiped the blude away.

“ Aye thocht I muckle o' my gudeman,
An' far mair think I noo ;
He's died for the Lord that died for him ;
God forgie them that slew ! ”

“ ’Twere nocht but richt, ” quoth Clavers cruel,
“ Gin ye lay by his side ; ”
“ Ay, wark your will, ” she answered him,
“ Was never gladder bride ! ”

She sat there still as the gloamin' fell,
 An' they turned and rode away ;
 Still when the heath grew dusk in nicht
 On her knees the dead head lay :

But when the first star glimmered out
 I' the welkin quiet an' blue,
 Ae lang look took she o' the een
 She lo'ed, sae sichtless noo ;

An' syne she shut the eyelids white,
 An' kamed the clotted hair,
 An' rowed him in his shepherd's plaid
 Wi's life-blude reddened sair ;

She laid him on the purple heath,
 Gently as babe that slept ;
 Nae word said she till a' was done,—
 Syne sat her down an' wept !”

FATHER.

Ay, wife, the wife's weird was the sairest there ;
 Gude soldiers aye the women-folk o' Christ !
 Let's hear noo Davie's Ballant o' the twa

Margarets we kent oursels, in Wigton Bay
Wha drank o' Solway's flood for Christ His sake.

MOTHER (*reciting*).

"A bonny May day on the Solway's shore,
An' twa stakes fixed i' the sea ;
The tide, the merry west win' afore,
Comes galloping up wi' glee.

"But what is yon by the far out stake,
Glints white i' the sun this day ?
Is't a bonny grilse caught for the fishers to take,
Or a sea-gull that wings ower the Bay ?"

"Na, kimmer, na, yon's nae silver fish,
Nor yet is't a white sea-maw,
But an auld woman's siller-grey head I wis,
Whar the westerin' win' doth blaw !"

"An' what is yon flutters nearer by,
Frae yon ither stake i' the Bay ?
Is't streamers o' gowden silk that fly,
Or yellow sea-weed gay ?"

"FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT." 281

"Na, kimmer, na, yon's nae streamer o' silk,
Nor tresses o' sea-weed fair,
But a braw captured flag, o' Grierson o' Lag,
Margaret Wilson's shinin' hair !"

Oh the merry west win' it lauchs for glee
As it chases the dancin' tide,
An' the glint o' the sun is on the sea,
Christ's Chariot that's come for His Bride !

It has wet the auld woman's fit,—her knee,
—It creeps her waist a' round,
Oh God ! her mouth it's aneath the sea !
Hark to the gurglin' sound !

"Marget Wilson," they cry, "Look, what there ye see !
At ye're ain knee the creepin' tide !"
"What see I but Christ wrestlin' there," quoth she,
"At ane o' His members' side ?"

"The tide it creeps up, as ye may see !
Oh Marget say 'God save the King' !
Whar Marget M'Lauchlan her weird did dree
Nae mair ye see ony thing

But a glint o' sunlight on the sea
Left by the Chariot wheel—"
"God save him, gif He will," quoth she,
"His safety wish I weel."

They hae taen her frae the dancin' tide,
Half dead drew to the shore,
"She's said it, Sir! she's said it!" cried;
Quoth Lag, that villain hoar—

"Damned bitch, what sic prayers want we o'?"
Tender the oath!" Then she,
"Christ's child am I, sae let me go,"
—And drowned was in the sea.

FATHER.

Noo gie's the battle-ballant o' Drumclog;
An' tell the bairns hoo whiles Christ's folk can fecht.

MOTHER (*reciting*).

Oh, Harlaw Height saw a bonny bonny sight,
In the merry merry month o' June,
For mony a worthy wight was at Harlaw Height,

Lang afore the set o' the moon! the moon!

Lang afore the set o' the moon!

Oh prood was their Bond, gin it wasna beyond

Their skill to mak folk o't tak tent!

Though Lauderdale sware, wi' his elbows a' bare,

By Jehovah! wha didna 'd repent, repent,

By Jehovah! wha didna 'd repent!

Heritors¹ as I ween, when folk preach on the green,

Bode wife, bairns, servants a' keep,

At hame to be seen, their ain four wa's atween!

My certes, they tak us for sheep, for sheep,

My certes, they tak us for sheep!

Syne the wild Hielan' Host upon Glasgow's coast

They sent down to ravage an' rive,

Till the lads o' the College left gettin' o' knowledge,

At the Brig-end to harry that hive, that hive,

At the Brig-end to harry that hive!

Or they gat them back hame, wi' our honey in kame!

—And syne cam that sinfullest "Cess,"

¹ Landed proprietors.

Their tax as they name,—a sin an' a shame,—
Feeding sodgers oursels to oppress, oppress,
Feeding sodgers oursels to oppress !

Sae Harlaw Height saw a bonny bonny sight,
In the merry merry month o' June !
Sir Robert ¹ he has come, wi' sword, pike an' drum
To the preachin' or set o' the moon, the m'oon,
To the preachin' or set o' the moon !

An' mony mony mair, a' Avondale is there,
On the yellow broomy knowe that morn,
Wives an' bairnies a wheen, an' the tartans atween,
Aye a glint o' the steel pike an' horn ! an' horn !
Aye a glint o' the steel pike an' horn !

Hist ! a shot frae the hill ! Maister Douglas stan's still,
His Bible in's han' for his text,
“Ye hae gotten the theory,” quick doth he say,
“Noo gie us the practice next, next,
Noo gie us the practice next !”

¹ Sir Robert Hamilton.

For there right across the Drumclog Moss
Stands Clavers wi’ his men a’ !
Oh stern stern they gather, amang the heather
Our armed men a’ in a raw, a raw,
Our armed men a’ in a raw !

Adoun the brow they are marching now,
They are singing a’ thegither,
An’ Loudon looks doun frae his rocky croun,
To hear that sang frae the heather, heather,
To hear that sang frae the heather.

“In Judah’s land God is well known,
His name in Israel’s great ;
In Salem is His Tabernacle,
In Sion is His seat.

Their arrows of the bow He brake,
The shield, the sword, the war.
More glorious Thou than hills of prey,
More excellent art far.”

Syne slap across the Drumclog Moss
An’ at them, ane an’ a’ !

Rins mony a bride, at her gudeman's side
To kep him 'gin he fa', he fa'!
To kep him 'gin he fa'!

Clavers' dragoons, fause thieves an' loons,
Wavered, syne brake, syne fled,
His ain gude horse fell doun a corse
Fu' a mile ayont his dead, his dead,
Fu' a mile ayont his dead!

And six we laid, ilk in his plaid,
'Neath Drumclog's Moss in the Glen,
But hoo daur we greet for them, as 'twas meet,
For their King that died like men, like men,
For their King that died like men?

Boy.

I wish we had been there, Faither, to see
Clavers an' a' his men runnin' awa!
I'd hae rin after them! I'm nane frichtet
For sodgers!—it's the howlets an' the sea
Soughin' o' nichts.—

FATHER.

Ay, Willie, but the howlets an' the sea
Soughin' o' nichts ye're weird ; the wee bit Cross
The King gies His wee lad to thole as His
Wee sodger ! Will maun be a man an' mind
That, when the nicht comes an' the howlets hoot,
An' his heart loup ! God's arms are aye about
His folk, my bairn, here in this Solway cave,
As in our ain theeked cottage on the Merse ;
An' though at whiles 'tis by a bloody yett ¹
Or fiery chariot that He taks them Hame,
Yet aye, couthie ² an' safe He wraps them in His
plaidie.

Gie's Prophet Peden in the Moss, gudewife,
That fand the black mist lappet o' God's cloak.

MOTHER (*reciting*).

"Here let us pray," quoth Peden, and stood still
On the black moss ;
(Atween them and their foes a wee bit hill
Was a' to cross :)

¹ Gate.

² Snug.

“ If that the Lord hear not our prayers, this hour
Dead men we be ;
Oh God ! not idle this their day and power
Thy foes can be :

But hast nae ither wark for them but send
After us here ?
Send them whar Thou the strength to flee dost lend,
Worn we an’ sere

Wi’ strength a’ gane. Twine them about the hill,
Cast Thy coat’s lap
Ower puir auld Sandy, Lord ! this ance frae ill
Let it us hap.”

—God’s coat-lap was the mist that day that ower
The moss did fa’,
Till word cam’ to their foes elsewhere to scour,
An’ saved them a’ !

Boy.

Let’s pray to God, then, Faither, an’ He’ll send
Clavers awa, an’ let us hame to milk
Auld Brownie in the byre, an’ hear Rodger

Bark on the hill, an’ puss purr at the fire,
An’ nae mair howlets or the soughin’ sea !

FATHER.

Ay, pray, my bairn ! an’ Hame in His gude time
Surely ye’ll win, though maybe Hame may be,
Instead o’ our wee cot upon the Merse,
Ane o’ the mony Mansions He has gane
To get us ready by the Tree o’ Life.

ACT V.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

RICHARD CAMERON.

MICHAEL CAMERON.

Three Onlookers at Proclamation of Sanquhar Declaration.

TURNKEY of Edinburgh Tolbooth.

STRANGER.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Sanquhar, June 22, 1680.

RICHARD and MICHAEL CAMERON *riding up the main street with a troop of twenty horsemen, the Camerons dismount at the Market Cross, the rest of the horsemen forming a ring about them and the inhabitants flocking round.*

RICHARD CAMERON *gives out a Psalm, which is sung, then offers a Prayer.*

MICHAEL CAMERON (*reading from a paper*).

WE do, by these presents, disown Charles Stuart, at has been reigning, or rather tyrannising, on the throne of Britain these years bygane, as having any right, title to or interest in the Crown of Scotland,

for Government,—as forfeited several years since, by his perjury and breach of covenant both to God and His Kirk, and by his tyranny, and breach of the very *leges regnandi*, (the very essential conditions of government,) in matters civil.—We do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices.”

[After another prayer from RICHARD CAMERON, they remount, and with the other horsemen ride silently and sternly away.]

FIRST ONLOOKER.

Heard ever aught like that? Certes, it is
Beginning o' the end! Oh, not for aye
The blood o' God's saints 'neath His altar cries
“How long O Lord?” in vain! The Bloody House
Hath its doom spoke this day, nothing I doubt!

SECOND ONLOOKER.

Ay, 'tis a bloody House. The Duke o' York
Was wroth with Monmouth for the prisoners spared,
Men say, at Bothwell Brig: the King himsel'
Said laughing, “Nae sic trouble had there been

Anent the prisoners gin I had been there !”
To whilk, Monmouth replied, “Your Majesty
Then should have sent a butcher and not me.”

THIRD ONLOOKER.

Better ’t had been for mony an ane, poor souls,
Gin slain at Bothwell ! Greyfriars Kirkyard,
Wi’ fifteen hundred mair, in sun and shower
Five months on the bare ground ; or stowed away
Doun under deck wi’ hatches locked and chained,
Meatless and drinkless, till the ship gaed doun
In the North Seas, (though kinder yet mayhap
Than slavery in the Plantations where
’Twas bound,) were waur deathbeds nor Bothwell
Brig !

FIRST ONLOOKER.

Men say auld Donald Cargill ’twas prepared
First rough draft of their Proclamation here,
In manner of a Covenant, that ends

“We do bind and oblige ourselves to defend each
other and ourselves in worshipping of God, and
in our natural rights and liberties, divine and civil,
till we shall overcome, or send them down under

debate to our posterity, *that where we end they may begin.*"

SECOND ONLOOKER.

Bold men they be thae Camerons ! Sae, here
In full light o' the day, at Market Cross,
To read their Proclamation !

THIRD ONLOOKER.

Ay, nothing

Doth Ritchie in a corner ! Heard ye tell
O's sermon when he cam frae Holland back,
Wherein he said, "The maist part o' the Land
Cry out, 'Nae other King but Cæsar ! Nae
Other King but Charles !' but we maun cry
'Nae other King will we but Christ.' Say ye,
'Are ye against Monarchic Government ?'
Not much are we taen up with that : if God
Let pure Government be established, that
Is best : but if ye would have God for you
Ye must cut off *this* King, *these* Magistrates.
If ever ye in Scotland see good days
Without disowning of the present King
Never believe me more ! I know not gif
This generation will be honoured to

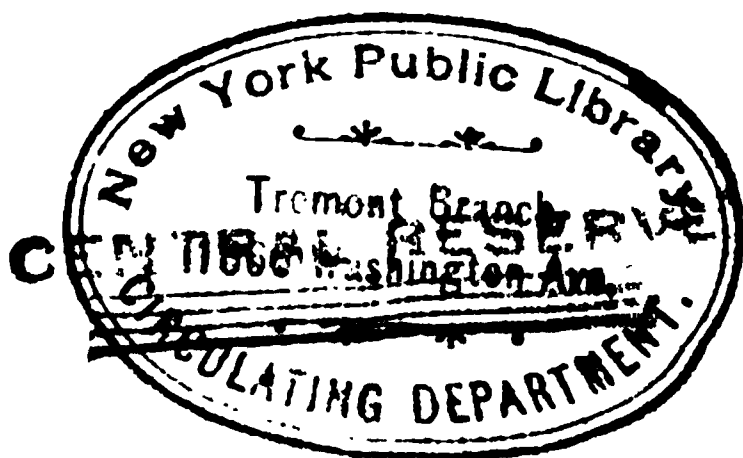
Cast off these rulers, but whom the Lord
Makes instruments to bring back Christ and all
Our liberties, shall sic be as disown
This King and all his Magistrates. Let them
Take heed, though they to scaffolds take us, or
Do kill us in the fields, the Lord will raise
Avengers on them ! Rather had we die
Than live in the same country with them ; here
Outlive God's glory quite departing hence."

SECOND ONLOOKER.

The promise Ritchie gave the ministers,
Against the Indulgence not to preach, doth lie
Heavy upon his heart. He lodgeth wi'
Ane I weel ken, she saith his chamber-door
All day he keepeth shut, and when she speired
Wherefore sae sad,—for cause of that promise,
He said, he kent his carcass should be dung
Or lang upon the wilderness.

FIRST ONLOOKER.

Maist like
It will ! Mony a precious carcass doth
Enrich these days our wildernesses. Sure



A bonny hairst¹ Scotland should hae or lang!
That sermon heard I not, yet ane he preached
By Crawfordjohn, upon that Word “Ye will
Not come unto me that ye may have life,”
I’ll mind unto my dying day!—quoth he,
“My Master hath been crying unto you
In Muirkirk, Crawfordjohn and Douglas, What
Say ye? Shall I away and tell my Master
That ye will not come?” Then looking round him
On the great wild moor outstretching to the sky,
And to the watchers watching on the heights,
And the big hills beyond,—“I instruments
Do take before these hills and mountains round,
That this day I have offered Him to you;
Look over to the Shaw-head and those hills,
Witnesses all they are now. Look at them!
When ye are dying they shall come before
Your face.”—Syne fell baith he and a’ the folk
In a calm weeping: ne’er shall I forget.

THIRD ONLOOKER.

A right true soldier Richard Cameron is

¹ Harvest.

O’ his King Christ ! His Sanquhar Declaration
Will shake or lang King Charles’ Throne, I trow !

SCENE II.

Edinburgh Tolbooth, February 18, 1688.

STRANGER *returning from the Execution of James
Renwick. A TURNKEY of the Tolbooth.*

STRANGER.

“A pity ’tis he held such principles ;
He was a pretty lad,” the Bishop said,
And ne’er I saw a prettier !

TURNKEY.

Ay, Sir
Made he a happy end ?

STRANGER.

Most happy, as

It seemed. The drums beat while he spake, yet once
In a short pause, like sudden gush of song
When a lark soars to heaven, all heard the words
In tones most clear and sweet, "Soon shall I be
Above these clouds, soon shall I be above
These clouds! To glorify Thee, O my Father!
And enjoy Thee endlessly for evermore."
—They were his last or the axe fell.

TURNKEY.

Ay, Sir,

And his last written here in the Tolbooth,
"I go to your God and to my God. Death
To me is as a bed to the weary."
And he but six-and-twenty to his years!
Surely, Sir, bloodily these bloody days
Stand to be answered for?

STRANGER.

How long hast held
Thy post here in the Tolbooth?

TURNKEY.

Ten bad years

Some July next, I've done mine office, Sir,
 —A wife I hae and bairns ;—but he's the last,
 —Sweet Mister Renwick—that I'll turn key on !
 Though maybe nane the waur they've fared, that auld
 John shut them in ! The drap o' ink and scrap
 O' paper to bid freens guid bye, that whiles
 He gied's nae matter to the Council, Sir,
 (Sic as it is,) I'm thinking, and maybe
 'Twill stand auld John in stead wi' the ither Judge,
 Wha kens ?—but nae mair turning o' their keys
 On folk a hantle better nor himsel'
 For him ! He's sick o't, frae first nicht he cam,
 And Ritchie's bloody head had for first arles.¹

STRANGER.

A sight o' things ye maun hae seen, good John,
 In this auld grim Tolbooth. Wha's bloody head
 Was it ye had for arles ? Let's hear the tale.

TURNKEY.

Wha's wast, Sir ? Wha's but Ritchie Cameron's ?
 Ye'll mind Bruce caught them, resting on a knowe,
 Some sixty o' them, at Ayr's moss : Ritchie

¹ Promise-money.

Himself, and Michael Cameron, Hackston
O' Rathillet, the lad James Grey, and mair ;
Escape they couldna, sae they bode to fecht.
First, three times, as they tell, did Ritchie pray,
" Lord spare the green, and take the ripe." Syne
said

To Michael, " Noo lets fecht it to the last ;
This day, I've longed for it, and prayed for it,
The day 'tis for the Crown ! Fecht weel, for all
O' you who fall, open I see Heaven's gates."
And sae fell Ritchie fighting wi' the best !
Then Murray cuttet aff his head and hands
And brought them here, his headless body left
In the Ayr's moss. His auld faither we had
Here in the Tolbooth,—'twas first nicht I cam,
A yeunker yet, as Turnkey. Weel I mind
How the cruel beasts brought him the bloody head
And hands, and speired at him, did he ken them.
I mind the auld man wi' his trembling hands
Lifted and kissed them ower and ower, the tears
Frae his auld een washing the blood, and said
" I know, I know them for my ain dear son's !
It is the Lord ! Good is His will ! Wrong me
Nor mine He canna, He has made goodness

And mercy a' our days to follow us."

Ay, Sir, I loathed the Tolbooth frae that hour !

STRANGER.

What did they after with the head and hands ?

TURNKEY.

Murray bode show them to the Council, Sir ;
Ane there tellt me, he said, " There are the Head
And hands o' a man who lived praying and preaching,
And died praying and fighting."

STRANGER.

Other strange things ye bode to see, these ten
Years by-gane here in the Tolbooth ?

TURNKEY.

Ay, Sir,

A hantle.¹ Here I was that July day,
Young Mister Renwick ye saw die this day,
In the Grassmarket stood himsel' aside
Auld Donald Cargill's scaffold, (him that drew
First up the Sanquhar Declaration, as

¹ Many.

They tell,) and heard him as he put first foot
Upon the ladder say "The Lord knows I
Go on this ladder with less fear than e'er
I mounted pulpit with. Now am I near
The getting of the Crown."—Men say 'twas there
The laddie vowed the life to Christ he's gien
This day.—Turnkey here was I too that nicht,
Hauding the Lady Sophy Lindsay's train
In his ain lacquey's livery claithes, Argyle
Wan through the Castle guard, (hearing next day
He bode to ludge wi' us in the Tolbooth,)
And 'scaped them a'. The sentry tellt mysel'
Hoo Argyle drapped her gown-tail on the ground
Just at the Castle yett, and hoo she threw
Its draggled tail into his face smearin'
It sae wi' mud that nane could ken, and ca'd
Him "Careless loon," and sae wan they safe through
And Turnkey was I when (four years gane by,)
They had him in the Castle at the end,
And heard him say the morning o' his death
More joy he had and comfort in that day
Than the day after he 'scaped frae the Castle.
I was wi' him that oped his chamber door,
(He taking aye a short nap after meals,)

And let the Council's messenger see him
After his dinner sleeping his last sleep
Pleasantly as a child, an hour but frae
The Block !

STRANGER.

Saw ye Peden the Prophet, or
He died ?

TURNKEY.

Na, Sandy jouket the Tolbooth !
Fain had they had him here, but at the last,
(As on the Wigton Moor afore,) " God cast
The lap o' His coat ower him," let him ken
(By inner licht o' warning in his sawl,)
His cave discovered, sae caused him to pass
Unto his brother's house, there gart his foes,
Seeking him, pass the place he lay ; after,
In eight-and-forty hours, as he had said,
But ¹ ony enemy he was at rest !
Lang " O to be wi' Ritchie in Ayr's moss "
Was aye his cry—" to rest me in the grave,
For sma' rest hae I had in a' my life."
Yet aye he said, " Bury me where ye will

¹ Without.

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My body shall be lift again," as cam
To pass ; for frae the Laird o' Auchenleck's
Ain isle dragged they his rotting banes, and burst
His coffin and tare aff his shroud. They say
That saw, that though nae breath o' air had stirred
That day, like sudden whirlwind there cam
A blast and caught his shroud and twist it round
A great limb o' a plane-tree whilk forthwith
Withered, and stands, a black and shrivelled arm
Uplift to Heaven there this day !—Upon
The Gallows Hill aboon Cumnock they hung
Him dead : and after, like a felon laid
Aneath the Gallows Tree, as he had said,
" Wi' place where I shall be buried at last
Ye all shall be displeased, yet I charge ye
Lift not my banes again." Sae there he lies.

STRANGER.

Men say he prophesied afore he died
Anent our poor Kirk here in Scotland ?

TURNKEY.

Ay,
" Dark days," quoth he, " sall be, sic as our Kirk

Ne’er saw the like, nor (ance weel ower) sall see,”
And faith his words cam true! Twenty-eight years
O’ Hangman’s gallows and o’ bloody block!
Three hundred sixty-twa James Renwick maks
Murdered wi’ form o’ law; nigh five hundred
In cauld blood slain without; men do count, Sir,
Wi’ them in battle fallen—they as slaves
Sent to Plantations far away, or drowned
In voyage there in the stormy seas; banished
To the wild islands o’ the North; or shut
Up in our Tolbooth here or elsewhere;
Them that died perished o’ cauld and hunger
On mountains or on moors; in our poor realm
O’ Scotland, eighteen thousand folk have tholed ¹
Or died for Christ His Crown and Covenant!
Dark days i’ faith, as Sandy prophesied!
God grant his ither words come true as weel!

STRANGER.

What were his other words?

TURNKEY.

“Yet John,” he said, (to John Clark o’ Muirbrook

¹ Suffered.

It was he spake,) “ Frae her grave shall the Kirk arise,
And at crack o’ her winding-sheet, wi’ fear
Shall sic as had hand in her burial
Be fair distraught ; then shall there be brave days
For our poor Kirk in Scotland, she shall come
Forth wi’ a bonny bairn-time at her back.
I shall not live to see these days, but ye may, John.”

STRANGER.

God grant they come !

TURNKEY.

Amen, Sir, and Amen !

SCENE III.

In front of the Edinburgh Tolbooth.

*The same STRANGER meeting the same TURNKEY,
December 1688.*

STRANGER.

Good morrow mine auld friend ! Other days now
Frae when I saw ye last ! Ye’ve tint your keys !
A fine flight o’ your jail-birds I hae met
Down yonder in the Canongate ! like swallows
When gean-trees redden, gathered on rails
For flight ! What do ye wi’ the ladders here
Speeling¹ the Auld Tolbooth ?

TURNKEY.

Ay, surely Sir,
Thank God they’re tint, thae bloody-rusted keys !
Fu’ glad the Bishops and the Council be
To set the jail-birds loose that Clavers caught,

¹ Climbing.

An' see their backs afore they tell ill tales
Noo that the Papist King has won safe ower
The water ; (stealing doun his secret stairs
At Whitehall !) to his Popish friends in France.
(He's better there I'se warrant, an' we here
A sight better without him !) At Lambeth
They say he threw the Great Seal in his spite
Out o' his wherry deep into the Thames !
Thank God we're done wi' him, and he wi' us !
What are thae ladders for to speel Tolbooth ?
What for but to bring down thae heads that
there's

Stood whitening mony a year ! The Council, Sir,
It is that gies the word ! They arna fain
Gillespie Gromach an' his son up there
Should win first lug¹ o' the new King and Queen
Frae Holland wi' their tales ! An' just we've taen
Frae Netherbow Port, Warristone and auld
Donald Cargill. A student lad took doun,
A while syne at the hazard o' his life,
James Guthrie's that for seven-and-twenty years
Had stood aboon the Port, and buried it.
Ye've heard tell, hae ye no, hoo Middleton

¹ Ear.

(That judged him,) driving through the Port weeks
after,

Gude Mister Guthrie's head spat draps o' blude
Doun on his coach, nae washing wad tak out?

STRANGER.

Thank God these days are ower! The words ye said
Auld Prophet Peden spake come true at last;
At crack o' Christ His winding-sheet a' they
That buried Him are gane clean mad wi' fear!

RIFT V.

“YEA, HATH GOD SAID?”

CLOSING YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY, A.D.

“YEA, HATH GOD SAID?”

WHAT rifts are in thy Reek, in these last days,
My Scotland, Land of story and of song?
Changed is thy field of combat, and the haze
Of present battle-smoke too close and strong
Above thy fighters, foiled or victor, lies
For Rifts that tell thy tale to mortal eyes.

Yet through the Battle's Reek, not sight but sound,
Ghost-voices through the smoke-gloom, faint and far,
Come to us, listening, from thy battle-ground,
With fitful hint of how doth go the war ;
The eternal war of Truth, Freedom, and Right,
'Twixt Powers of Darkness and a God of Light.

“Yea, hath God said?” in questioning tones we
hear,

(Words surely we heard spoken long ago,)

“Yea, hath God said?” reverberate far and near,
Echoed or echoing, or loud or low ;

“Yea, hath God said?”—the ancient battle-cry
Wherewith of old *one* spurred to victory !

From Rocks, unnumbered Æons that unfold,
From Lower Life that claims man as its kin,
—What Fall in upward strife of New from Old ?
What place for Saviour where is none for Sin ?—
From Tomb and Temple of a Past long dead,
From Scholar’s Learning sounds, “Yea, hath God
said ? ”

Is all for nothing then ? A myth, a dream,
Evanishing at touch of Day-dawn’s light ?
Hath He ne’er spoken ? Do our ears but seem
To hear His guiding voice athwart our night ?
Is no God-Cause for which our fathers bled ?
Is there no light of life upon our Dead ?

Hark ! from far cloud above the Battle's Reek,
 Another Voice comes breaking on the ear !
 Elsewhere we've heard, the words it too doth speak,
 As Rift through thunder-black of Lightning clear ;
 “This my belovèd Son, hear Him,” it saith,
 “My Living Word, my Light of Life on Death.”

Myths be there if ye will ! By myths that hold
 The Truth within the Fable, 'twas He taught
 Ever in Parables ; if from of old
 'Tis so His Father teaches, is there aught
 For marvel ? Best may children understand
 Father's deep Truth through Symbols at their hand.

Yea hath He spoken ; though His Truth lie furled
 Hid in the Parables Truth's self we deem ;
 If marred His words through man that reach His
 world,
 His Living Word, the Light, the Life, no dream !
 There *is* God-Cause wherein our fathers bled ;
 He *is* the Light of Life upon our Dead !

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE.

“ And I saw no Temple therein ; for the Lord God Almighty
and the Lamb are the Temple of it.”

ONE by one the mighty Builder
Takes our props of earth away,
Clears from scaffoldings that 'wilder,
Bares His Spirit-fane to-day.

Where His Temple's ancient glory,
Massive turrets, roofs of gold,
On Moriah's hill-top hoary,
Whence His Radiance shone of old,

Through the incense-cloud that hovered
O'er the morning Sacrifice ?
—Its aye-burning Lamp uncovered
On its ruined altar dies.

Its day is done. Shone his Shekinah
Next in the Church of Christ who died,
A living Church of Saints who twine a
Victor's crown for the Crucified :

Ah ! Tongues of Flame burned o'er each brow,
Steady and clear in her first glad youth !
But the Fire grew dim : can she guide us now
Unerring to God's Truth ?

The Glory flits :—on His Written Page
Glow's awhile as with Heaven's sole light ;
Falls an earth-shade now ?—Must our later age
Grove guideless then through the night ?

Not so ! Not so ! Though all Fanes that erst
Jehovah's Shekinah filled
Lay crumbled around us in the dust,
Oh doubting hearts, be stilled !

Not His Temple of old that Glory could hold,
Not His Church of the Crucified,
Not His Word though told through Saints of old ;
—Only God and the Lamb that died !

But avenues all to that Spirit-fane,
But lamps that light to the Shrine,
Left behind when the Holy of Holies we gain,
Swallowed up in the Light Divine.

EPILOGUE.

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God Himself and the Lamb the Temple there ;

Then why for earth's fanes strain our sight?

How mourn His lost Shekinah where

God

ght?

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